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**THE CALL FROM THE STRANGER
ON A JOURNEY HOME: CURRICULUM
AS CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF SELFHOOD**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

Hongyu Wang

B.A., Northeast Normal University, 1986

M.A., East China Normal University, 1993

December 2001

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For
my father, Wang Hezeng, my mother, Lin Shuduan,
and all my influential teachers

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ABSTRACT

Both utilizing and problematizing the notions of stranger, home, journey, and self through cross-cultural inquiry, gender analysis, psychoanalysis, and autobiography, this study attempts to draw a new picture of the human self and a new vision of curriculum. It draws upon the works of three great thinkers across space and time: Michel Foucault, a French philosopher; Confucius, an ancient Chinese sage; and Julia Kristeva, a French psychoanalyst and linguist.

Traveling through a contradictory yet generative space provided by the Foucaultian subject, the Confucian self, and the Kristevian subject, this study intends to address the issues of differences, connections, and creativity in depicting a new landscape of the self to enrich curriculum as a complicated conversation. The creative, transgressive aspect of the Foucaultian subject and the relational, holistic aspect of the Confucian self are taken to the Kristevian notion of woman as a stranger who creates through differences and dynamic relationships. Foucault's discourse and Confucian thought, as well as Confucian community and Kristevian community or manhood and womanhood, can be contradictory. Traveling back and forth between China and the United States, as a woman in the academic field, my journey across the ocean and through different discourses has already put me in an unsettling position, in contradiction, and in a situation of "aporia." My own experiencing of ambiguity and paradox makes me less interested in building the bridge between and among contradictions than in embracing "aporia," in a journey of creating new subjectivity. Such a journey enables me to understand curriculum as a continuous process of reaching out for other worlds and then returning to the self with new gifts of life.

PROLOGUE

As a Chinese woman who travels back and forth between Chinese culture and American (Western) culture, I attempt to work at the intersection of culture and gender, searching for a “third” space¹ in which the movement of the self across cultural and gendered differences becomes creative through dynamic interconnections. My journey to the West has enriched my understanding of both self and other. An immersed engagement with the other/stranger encourages me to look back upon my own traditions through a new light. The contradictory or even opposite nature of differences between Chinese culture and Western culture constantly asks me how these differences can be turned into a creative site on which new subjectivities can emerge. Embracing both through a third space of mutual transformation enables me to approach the issues of differences, multiplicity, and connections through an interactive and dynamic angle. Also taking the perspective of gender analysis, I question the binary of men and women and intend to build passages, tunnels, and interconnected paths so that the movement of women in and out of the landscape is simultaneous with the shifting positions of men. The intersection of gender and culture further complicates such conversations across differences.

My own personal journey of claiming myself through cultural and gendered layers of identity while at the same time questioning the very concept of naming has carried me go beyond the notion of “bicultural identity” (Young, 1998). Bicultural identity implies the co-existence of two different cultures but is problematic if conflicts and contradictions of two cultures are not addressed in a generative rather than a resolvable way. To work through a contradictory double, I suggest that we need a third

space embodying both cultures but at the same time honoring the otherness of each and encouraging passages and interactions between them. Such a third space is a transformative space in which different cultural layers of the self shift, intersect, and constantly change. Such passages, such dialogues across differences, such a cross-cultural inquiry do not intend to achieve consensus but aim at deeper and richer understanding providing space for multiplicity and contradiction which can further generate more passages. I choose Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, and Confucius, a Chinese philosopher in order to situate my discourse in conflicts and double gestures so that a transformative third space can be created.

While masculinity and femininity are socially constructed concepts, gendered understanding of social reality is necessary. The traditional dichotomies of mind and body, culture and biology, separation and connection, public and private, which usually correspond to man and woman (Grumet, 1988), define masculinity and femininity within separate realms of human life with the former being privileged. Challenges to a patriarchal dualism, I believe, depend upon the questioning postures of women who refuse to simply replace men's central positions but move through margins and boundaries while approaching the center in a disruptive way. Such a re-positioning of women who regenerate nourishing relations with mother but at the same time re-appropriate rather than repudiate the symbolic is another articulation of a third space which hosts and transforms both masculinity and femininity. While taking up gendered critiques of both Foucault and Confucius, I turn to Kristeva who regards woman as boundary-subject/stranger, shifting and creating through the web of connections and relationships.

The notions of journey, home, and stranger in Western discourse have gendered overtones privileging masculinity, which is defined by heroic postures and acts of leaving home to expand his horizons, while femininity is confined within a domestic home. To disrupt such a gendered tale, I re-appropriate the notion of journey as a journey both outward and inward, the notion of home as a home in creation, and the notion of stranger as a stranger situated in an unprivileged position who calls for new ways of life. Taking a viewpoint of Chinese culture, journey is possible and necessary only after the Chinese self becomes much more fragmented in the contemporary age and filial sons (and daughters) are called upon to travel outside of family searching for new ways of integration to reach another level of cultural consciousness. Home as the locus of Chinese social relationships now becomes a site which encourages young people to take on the mission of traveling out so that other landscapes of life can be brought back. As an exiled woman, my own longing for the Chinese relational ideal, through an engaged encounter with the stranger/the Western self, is inevitably transformed by its opening to new senses of life. Such a transformation, I would argue, is mutual to both the self and the stranger so that a third space beyond the conflicting double can be created to open up new vistas of humanity. Such a transformation makes a journey home possible. The notion of journey is different from the tourist notion of travel which might be a glance over landscapes without taking in anything new. A journey must involve an engaged dialogue with both self and other--in Bakhtin's term, a polyphonic dialogue--so that both self and other can be constantly transformed and generated anew. My journey to Michel Foucault in the West makes possible my return to Chinese traditions. Such a return is nevertheless a journey since my understanding of

the Confucian self is transformed by my encounter with the West. To a great degree, a journey home is not a simple trip back to my own spiritual roots, but is a process of constantly creating third spaces opening to new subjectivities. A mobile home, elaborated by Julia Kristeva through a dynamic interplay between the semiotic and the symbolic, becomes important here.

A stranger such as Michel Foucault, a very Western man who nevertheless powerfully challenges Western traditions, is simultaneously appealing and distant to me. His project of re-thinking the subject after the deconstructive claim of “the death of the subject,” attracts my attention as I walk around searching for a sense of the self in my exile from my homeland. The identity crisis in the West, though giving out a warning signal about normalized individualism, is somehow not very compatible from the contemporary Chinese concern about how to release the creativity of individuality in the web of sociality. Actually women both in the West and in China are historically denied any sense of the self, which makes Foucault’s call for the care of the self constantly echo in my ear as I continue my quest for the self. As a Western man who tries to regenerate the Greco-Roman tradition, Foucault nevertheless has his own limitations. With a critical distance, I engage with Foucault both as a woman and as a Chinese. A critical attitude towards both self and other is crucial to making journey an interactive process of transformation and creation through both taking in and reaching out. My experiences of reaching out to, and taking in, Foucault’s discourse send me back home to reclaim the Confucian self. The Foucaultian creative subject and the Confucian relational self, situated in different cultures, are in conflict with each other. The former emphasizes freedom and transgressive rupture while the latter focuses on

relationships and transformative continuity. This cross-cultural philosophical dialogue I attempt to initiate leads to a third space of relational individuality which embraces contradictions in a mutually transformative way.

My gendered engagement with both the Foucaultian subject and the Confucian self from a critical perspective takes me to Kristeva's discourse about stranger or strangeness which embraces self-creation through open relationality and paradoxical community. *Stranger* can be the status of being on the margin of two different worlds. Without fully belonging to any world and without enjoying the privileges of either world, the stranger has the potential to go beyond boundaries to create new worlds. According to Kristeva, women are strangers who stand at the door of two worlds: feminine and masculine. Women as boundary-subjects are situated in a complicated interplay between the semiotic and the symbolic. Without repudiating the significance of the symbolic, Kristeva calls for the embodiment of the semiotic in forming and developing the individual psyche. Such a call is not unique for women because strangeness within the self is universal to everyone, but women's unique experiences of the semiotic give them a peculiar position to become subjects in relation, in process, and in alterity. As the notion of journey is a journey both outward and inward, the notion of the stranger is both stranger outside and strangeness inside. Utilizing psychoanalytic theories, Kristeva argues that the relationship with the stranger is also a relationship with the self, which calls for a paradoxical community which welcomes foreigners/foreignness. Reflecting upon women's experiences and elaborate a constructive relationship between self and other, Kristeva depicts the creative subject through and by differences, singularities, and interconnections. While appreciative of

her efforts to regenerate the semiotic, I question Kristeva's binary between the semiotic and the symbolic and challenge her psychoanalytic notion of the founding role of separation (from the maternal) in establishing identity from Chinese linguistic and cultural views. Such questioning also takes me beyond the binary between femininity and masculinity.

The multiple landscapes of the self unfolded at the intersection of gender and culture and through different languages and communities make a third space for self a multiple space in which interdependence and independence can be claimed at the same time and a hybridity of subjectivity constantly brings something new to meaning-makings of identity and community. Herein also lies one's own space through the multiplicity of identity and the interconnections of life.

The multiplicity of self, language, and culture I attempt to bring in to a third space leads to different styles of writing. The first chapter and the last chapter are highly autobiographical, echoing each other. The second chapter, as a theoretical attempt to situate my discussion on Foucault, Confucius, and Kristeva, is highly academic. Autobiographical writings are scattered through the third chapter on the Foucaultian subject and the fourth chapter on the Confucian self. The fifth chapter, on the Kristevian subject, echoes the double voice I already utilize in the first chapter, although in a different way. The multiple styles of writing, to a great degree, are intentional efforts to work in a third space which embraces contradictions and ambiguity. Throughout the chapters, especially when I bring narratives into the writing, there are some sentences incomplete according to standard English grammar. By keeping sentences short, I intend to create a literary rhythm and to some degree

introduce the poetic aspects of Chinese language which is structured in a different way. Such is my experimental effort to mingle academic and literary writings so that a space open to differences is created through language.

In short, a transformative and creative third space I search for is impossible without a journey both outward and inside, and without listening to the call of the stranger both outside and inward. The call from the stranger on a journey home is a journey into a third space beyond the binaries of self and other, femininity and masculinity, and the semiotic and symbolic to be engaged with creative transformation of selfhood. Curriculum becomes self-generative through such a journey into a third space and is a process of making possible self-transformation/co-transformation and self-creation/co-creation of both teacher and student.

Notes

1. In his East/West inquiry, David Smith (1996) approaches the issue of identity from a "third space," a middle space, neither east nor west but questions the taken-for-granted assumptions. He borrows the notion of "Third Space" from Homi Bhabha (1990) but develops it differently. A third space I am interested in is a space in which both parts of a conflicting (cultural, gendered, or psychic) double interact with and transform each other, especially through the multiplicity of the self, giving rise to new realms of subjectivity.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

**ALAS, I cannot stay in the house, and home has become no home to me,
for the eternal Stranger calls, he is going along the road.**

The sound of his footfall knocks at my breast; it pains me!

The wind is up, the sea is moaning.

**I leave all my cares and doubts to follow the homeless tide, for
the Stranger calls me, he is going along the road.**

(Rabindranath Tagore, 1916, p.8)

A prayer. A silent prayer for a more peaceful world. A song. A voiceless song singing the call from the stranger. A swing. A swing back and forth, simultaneously between different landscapes, different ways of life. A story. An unspeakable story of how a common soul struggles to go as far as possible reaching out for the light. A dance. A motionless dance across the ocean on a journey home. A journey. A journey of a speechless girl learning how to speak, to sing, and to laugh. A journey of a woman leaving home in search of mother's invisible traces. A journey of a Chinese woman in exile longing for an im/possible union between self, other, and universe. A journey of creating home, in a third space, among the multiple. A conversation. A heartfelt conversation a daughter attempts to initiate between mother and father, with the world. A curriculum. A transformative curriculum through a shifting inter/subjective space, carrying unexpected echoes, opening to alternative paths into an ever-changing kaleidoscope of the self and the cosmos.

A Travel Back Home

A hot summer day. The flight from Detroit to Beijing. A journey home. The plane almost reaches Beijing, I am surprised to feel so calm. In my imagination, I would have very complicated feelings at the moment of approaching the heart of my motherland. Looking out of the window, clouds shift, move, gather and spread, in all

kinds of possible shapes. I smiled, fractal, my American major professor's favorite metaphor for curriculum.

It is announced that the plane is going to arrive in Beijing soon. I start to look for the Great Wall--the symbol of Chinese civilization. What will I feel when I see it I ask myself. Unfortunately no matter how hard I try, I just cannot see it. Somehow I am disappointed. Somehow I am relieved.

Because of the luggage problem, I am the last person to appear at the welcome gate. A friend of my mother finds me first and calls to my mother who is at another gate. Mom comes over--her hair turning all white, her face filled with worries. She rushes to me and cries out: "My goodness, I thought you missed the flight somewhere!" At the moment of seeing my mother, with so many people around her greeting each other--the airport waiting room was as crowded as the streets--I am overwhelmed. Wow, I am in a different world! Mother has become a stranger to me somehow. Julia Kristeva (1991) says, a foreigner is a person who has lost his (her) mother. Have I lost my mother after my stay in the United States?

In the car driving to my mother's friend's house, there is an awkward silence at the beginning. I do not know what to say and perhaps my mother is also speechless to some degree. After an initial silence, we speak about the flight, the weather, and the new highways constructed in Beijing.

The first thing we need to do after I am in Beijing is to get a visa for my re-entrance into the United States. My mother and I ride together on the bus traveling between the house and the American embassy three times in order to get that official stamp. Mother had usually been with me in my entrance into the public and had been

my mentor. Mother's company for my leaving home again. The traditional psychoanalytic picture of a powerful father stepping into the asocial bond between mother and child to bring the child out in the public is absent in my story. *[An Indian woman comments that in Eastern culture, mother plays a very important role in children's lives despite her submissive status to her husband. Father, on the other hand, is a distant and remote figure out of the reach of the child. Julia Kristeva (1977) also observes that the mother occupies a[n] (empty) center in Chinese culture. They make me question myself. To what extent are my own experiences that I used to hold as only personal, actually culturally constructed? To what extent are they the results of the dynamics of a particular household not confined within cultural norms? Since psychoanalysis is mainly a Western creation, to what degree can it apply to Chinese or Eastern culture? Actually it is not only a cross cultural issue. Carolyn Steedman (1997), from her own perspective as a working class Western woman, attempts to understand how complex human relationships challenge a universal theoretical framework in psychoanalysis. Is not a powerful father a myth?]*¹

When I am waiting for my turn in the long line which is formed mainly by young people, looking at those young women with their eyes shining with longing, longing for a new world, I ask myself: Are they going to achieve their American dreams after they go there? Will they be some day as lost as I have been and still am?

After we get my visa, we are on the train to Harbin--my hometown, a northern city in the coldest area in China. According to Yu Qiuyu² (1999), Ningan County, which is near to my hometown, was the place for exiling ancient intellectuals and rebels in the Qing Dynasty (1644 A.D.-1911 A.D.).

In Harbin, I take a walk with my mother every night. We talk, argue, almost every time ending up with disagreement. She must think she is losing me to the United States. One day I half-jokingly say: "You and father fight inside of me." My mother immediately retorts: "Of course not. It is China and the United States that fight inside of you." I laugh. Actually both are true. But my mother never understands or is willing to acknowledge how the emotional fight between her and my father influenced my life or my sisters' lives. I was a quiet girl. But mother is fond of telling me how at the age of one year and half I held books, newspapers, or anything with Chinese characters on it to read aloud using my own "language." How have I become silent? I wonder. What I remember is that when I began my struggle to speak as a teenager, I usually could not find my own voice. That is because, some feminists (Grumet, 1988; Pagano, 1990) may say, the child is delivered to the father's symbolic order. We as women alienate ourselves in the word of the father. That is why we do not have our own language to speak. *[In Chinese culture, silence is not something necessarily negative. It could be a symbol of wisdom. It could be a sign of reservation or modesty. A child who is quiet but produces good work is usually praised rather than being encouraged to speak. Writing as a physical, visual, emotional, and intellectual practice is privileged over speech. Moreover, in general, action is much more important than words. Chinese tend to express their feelings in action rather than in words. The situation might be different in Western Culture.]*³ *Silence is something that you must break through in order to reveal what is suppressed by this silence. In feminist discourses, voice is often used to imply the presence of women's differences. In poststructural critiques, such a notion of presence is problematic and the embodiment of voice in an essentialized*

understanding of the self is challenged. In his deconstructive analysis, Derrida directly questions the privilege of speech as presence over writing as absence in Western thought. Approaching silence as something negative in promoting a person's self-cultivation, am I imposing a traditional Westernized discourse upon the Chinese situation? If voice is not that important, why must silence be broken to expose what is inside? On the other hand, though, if Western logocentrism is under question, why shouldn't Chinese tradition, with its writing dominating speech, be deconstructed?]

Is language necessarily masculine? My mother taught me Chinese poetry when I was two. I loved it. Such is not an uncommon practice in Chinese families, especially intellectual families. I suspect it is the musical rhythm of Chinese poetry that is so attractive to young children. As a written language, Chinese is embodied and intersubjective, not necessarily symbolizing the disconnection with mother. [In About Chinese Women (1977), Kristeva wonders whether or not Chinese language, because of its intonation and its visual and physical aspects in writing, maintains pre-Oedipal qualities. That is fascinating to me. But I want to further ask: if Chinese language has the pre-Oedipal attributes, if the interaction between yin and yang leads to man in woman and woman in man, if the Western ideal of autonomy and independence is lacking in Chinese culture, to what degree is the Oedipal struggle framed in the western contexts, but taken as so universal, applicable to the Chinese psyche? If Chinese is a more embodied language, how can Kristeva's distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic aspects of language be applicable to the Chinese self?] For me, it is the social and cultural construction of language rather than language itself that is implicated in patriarchy. As Kristeva (1996) argues, language is a heterogeneous construction from

which femininity is not excluded. We can use language as the site of creating new subjectivity for women. Helene Cixous (1994) also urges us to write as women, to write about ourselves for ourselves through the pens of our bodies, our passions, our hearts and our souls.

One day, in my elder sister's house, I read Yu Qiuyu's (1992) Bitter Travel in Culture. In the preface, he quotes Tagore's poem I used above. "Stranger" is translated into Chinese as "someone who has left home." From the poem, I get a strong sense of journeying and even exile without realizing its religious contexts. The call from the stranger. A journey into the unknown. It immediately touched me and aroused a certain resonance in my heart, since to a great degree, my journey in the United States is a journey of encountering the stranger. Such an opening to the stranger has carried me to see both the world and the self in a different way, but it also has thrown me into an unexpected world of uncertainty, ambiguity, and perplexity. What does it mean for a woman to leave mother/land for a foreign/father land? *[Is a foreign country necessarily a fatherland? How about those who feel at home in a foreign land? While my personal story coincides with the transition from a culture claiming relationships to a culture claiming autonomy, the fluidity of national boundaries in such a globalized contemporary society challenges the fixed notions of mother/father tales.]* My simultaneous longing for the Great Wall and my wish to be away from it. The strong desire for belonging, belonging to somewhere, safe from attack. The equally strong urge to break through the confinement, to challenge the enclosed mentality, and to be on my own way.

The notion of journey can be problematic from a feminist analytic angle. In the West, this notion has a strong sense of the self leaving home on the road to explore through frontiers, becoming autonomous and independent, or to become one with God in religious contexts. This abandonment of home in travel to become men "through performances of masculinity" (Smith, 1996, p.51) can be implicated in the denial of an original connection with mother. However, I would argue, home is not necessarily mother's home, although home is always associated with women. Only after I left home did I begin to experience the connection with my mother. *[Mother showed me a picture taken when I was less than one year old. I turned away from the camera while mom was smiling. Mom laughed: You are scared of the camera. While turning away from the camera, I also turned away from my mother who held me in her arms. Silently, I had run away from my mother for a long time. She was too strong for me. I did not dare to tell her my secret dreams, my unreasonable worries, and my sensitive cares. Only after I was enrolled in college could I gradually understand mother's legacy: you can survive in man's world only if you are strong-willed.]* For a woman who doesn't have her own language to speak, a journey is first of all a journey within, in search of lost voices and invisible traces. To some extent, this is a journey home for the return of what is repressed, excluded, and alienated, instead of a journey of leaving home. At the same time, a journey home is made possible only by a journey of leaving home at a symbolic level, not only in the sense of challenging father, but also in the sense of seeking the necessary independence from mother. As Virginia Woolf suggests, "thinking backing through our mothers is not aimed at becoming them" (Grumet, 1988,

p. 187). To travel beyond the domestic space of home, woman challenges the traditional boundary of masculinity and expands her femininity.

Home is not something preexistent, but is a process of creation. A Chinese poet, Yang Ming, says: "Were not all hometowns foreign towns at the beginning? The so-called hometown is actually the last place where our ancestors stopped in their wandering journey" (Quoted in Yu, 1992, p. 4). For women who are exiled from themselves, a home embracing both differences and connections is yet to be born. Speaking from my own personal journey, my leaving home leads me to reclaim mother instead of losing my connection with mother.

A journey is a personal journey first of all, but for Chinese it is inevitably a cultural and historical journey at the same time. In Bitter Travel in Culture, Yu (1992) talks about his travel around China and his cultural reflections during the journey. Whenever he pictures a landscape, he talks about Chinese culture and history. At those moments of facing a landscape, Yu feels that people, history and nature are all mingled together telling a unique story. The image of an autonomous and independent self in isolation from others has never existed in the Chinese psyche. This mingling of the personal, the cultural, and the historical is evident in Yu's comments:

Now that it is a wandering journey, every stopping cannot abandon a new beginning... I dare not make a wish for our huge culture, but I hope the words flowing out of my pen can bring you some taste after bitterness, understanding smiles after worries, relaxation after deep ponderation, and youth after agedness. (p. 5)

While talking about his own travel, he talks about Chinese culture, a culture with both glorifying and humiliating history. This heavy sense of historical, social and cultural responsibility has always been with many Chinese. As the ancient poet, Fan Zhongyan

says, "To be worried before the world is worried; to be happy after the world is happy."

The Chinese ideal of the union between the universe and the self stays with me, too, as I travel across the ocean to search for new ways of life.

As an exiled woman, I am wandering around in search of a possible home. I remember the tearful moment of reading Richard Bernstein's (1991) interpretation of Jacques Derrida: "We never quite are or can be at home in the world. We are always threatened by the uncanniness of what is canny; we are always in exile--even from ourselves. We may long and dream of being at home in our world, to find a 'proper' center, but we never achieve this form of presence or self-presence" (p. 179). The permanent deferral of a central presence in exile constantly deconstructs the possibility of being at home in order to make movement and critique possible. But as an already exiled woman, my longing for home asks me about the possibility of creating home. Home does not have to be a place, or a family, or a permanent location, for me, it is more a spiritual locus--not fixed, but unstable and regenerative--from which the passion of the soul can be both released and rested. Jo Anne Pagano (1990) tells me: "But as exiles, we can form our own communities. We can speak together a common language and make a home for ourselves in this world" (p. 155). Can a common language create a new home? Whose language? Mother's language? I travel back home in order to talk with my mother but we no longer speak the same language. Perhaps we have never really shared a common language. Back home does not bring me home but has turned my mother into a stranger. I have become a stranger to myself too.

A Dangerous Walk into the Stranger: Death and Re/birth

The space of freedom for the individual is love--it is the only place, the only moment in life, where the various precautions, defenses,

conservatisms break down, and one tries to go to the limit of ones' being; so it is fundamental. (Julia Kristeva, 1996, p. 121)

Confucius says: "At thirty I established myself."⁴ It symbolizes that a person has become mature. But when I was thirty, I tasted the lure of death.

Summer. Baton Rouge. I lie down on the top of the Indian mound outside of my office on the LSU campus and look into the sky, asking myself: What do I WANT in my life? Where is my SPACE? Where is my HOME? I have struggled so hard that I want to rest on the mound peacefully, forever. Finally I get up and wander/wonder around the campus, searching for my place without finding it: the door of my office is closed and no one has the key to it. I go back to my apartment, but I do not have the key to open it, either. Is there anything deeply inside of me which can keep me alive? What is it?

I keep wandering/wondering until I see lots of cars in a parking lot. I stop there and a moment of excitement slips through my heart. I want to drive the car on the interstate. There is so much more unknown world out there. I want to cry out: I have found my God in my heart--freedom! Suddenly I feel I have to say good-bye to China in a symbolic way. The union between self, other, and universe as my Chinese ideal does not work any more for me.

Time flies, and winter comes. Christmas time. Passing by the Indian mound again, I notice something I have never paid any attention to before. Curiously, I climb a little bit to reach it. To my astonishment, it is the root of an oak tree. Root. Home. There is an old Chinese saying: when a leaf falls down, it returns to the root of the tree. Root in a mound on which Indians performed their religious rituals a thousand years ago. Thousands of miles away from my hometown. Yang Ming has told me, home

could be a foreign town. I sit by the root and on the root. Looking ahead, I see a tree, an old oak tree on the other mound with a twisted trunk standing there quietly. Suddenly, I am caught by a moment of feeling at home. I am at peace with myself and with the world. Time stops at that moment and space exists eternally. I am forgetting myself, yet at the same time I am fully aware of my own existence. I am not thinking of anything, yet at the same time everything is in my mind. I feel so calm and peaceful, yet at the same time my passion flows through my whole body. Why I try so hard to find a home, I ask myself. Home is nowhere in the Derridian sense, but home is everywhere, wherever stranger/strangeness, other/otherness, foreigner/foreignness are welcome, regardless of the limitations of time and space. We may not have a common language, and actually we do not need a common language--common language always runs the risk of suppressing differences and the singularity of an individual person. But still a woman can create her own home in which m/other is welcome to speak, to sing, and to laugh. When Kristeva (1996) is asked about the woman's style of writing, she resists any attempt of making generalizations, instead she believes that each woman should speak about her own uniqueness. Embracing differences and multiplicity, home becomes a home in which people can live together expressing their own uniqueness without doing violence to one another.

Thinking about what happened last summer, I could not help but smile: driving, adventure, autonomy, what a lovely metaphor for a woman! [*Why not? I ask myself now. What if a woman can re-appropriate such metaphors to her own creative usage?*] Actually, I had just crashed my car upon the trailer hitch of a truck a month before that identity crisis. What a dangerous walk into the stranger! What a dangerous drive from

relationship into freedom! The stepping in of fatherland claiming autonomy, independence and freedom held me back from collapse but did not save me from being lost or further alienated from myself. I was as confused as a frustrated child who could not find her mother/land.

The unconscious desire for a complete divorce with my past, my tradition, and myself is complicated by a conscious claiming of my own spiritual roots. It takes me a long time to understand what is behind my conscious drive. The adventure into freedom does not prevent me from falling into silence. The blank pages of my journal are filled with unspeakable despair and speechless retreat.

The rebirth of the self happens along the road, slowly and painfully. In my personal quest, the clash between different understandings of the self situated in different cultures is inevitable. My own Chinese ideal of a self in peace with others and the universe refuses to take my farewell seriously and keeps resurfacing to hold me back from disappearing into the stranger. Peace or harmony may not be valued by Western culture, but for the Chinese mind it is dynamic and creative through embracing tensions. "To do whatever I want to do following my heart, I still can be righteous."⁵ Confucius regards it as his highest achievement, which indicates a creative harmony between the self and the (moral) Way. Is it possible to have another version of freedom based not upon individual autonomy but on relationships? Can freedom be reclaimed by an interactive view of both autonomy and relationships? Can one be really free without being at ease *with* others and *with* the world?

Death is inherently a part of human existence. The psychic or spiritual death I have experienced brings me new senses of life and a new awareness of existence. A

new self could be born out of death. In The Stranger (Camus, 1978/1942), Meursault, by refusing to give up his status as a stranger to the others' world and by refusing to come into the stranger's world--even God's heaven--chooses to die. Facing death, he is thinking of his mother at her life's end and realizes: "With death so near, Mother must have felt like someone on the brink of freedom, ready to start life all over again" (p. 154). He also feels like starting life all over again--does his outburst against the chaplain at the end of his life, in contrast to his indifference against the language of authority in the court, lead to the birth of an intensified yet peaceful sense of life? The power of language in symbolizing and expressing the self and the world plays a very important role in transforming death into rebirth. In Black Sun, Kristeva (1989) implies that artistic creation, literary expression, or religious faith, if imbuing symbolic representation with semiotic embodiment, can be effective for turning psychic death into a meaningful life. Using language in forms to signify and represent the loss, separation and discontinuity of human life, becomes key to enduring suffering and pain through creative activities.

The importance of language is coupled with the healing power of love. Psychiatrist Kay Jamison (1997) talks about how love accompanies her through the turbulence of every psychic death and lightens her path to the beauty of life in dark seasons. "After each seeming death within my mind or heart, love has returned to re-create hope and to restore life" (p. 215). Does Meursault's revelation at the end of his life through understanding his mother also imply the return of a lost loving connection for embracing death as re/birth?

My friend gives me a pair of Apache Tears. An Indian tribe used Apache Tears to protect themselves from the evil spirits of the world while they kept being exiled. Black, but put under the light, one can see the light through its blackness. Light through darkness. In exile, how can we deal with darkness both external and internal so that light can be brought forth? How can we make possible the rebirth of the self after losing our identity? A gentle walk between love and freedom leads me into a creative third space in which new subjectivity can be constantly created. Michel Foucault believes that the care of the self is a practice of freedom to go beyond limits. Confucius tells me personal cultivation is only possible through a loving (*ren*) relationship with others and with the world. Carrying my own tradition, entering into the realm of freedom, I attempt to search for a third space, a space beyond the in-between, a space embodying both but also transcending both, for a possible creative transformation of selfhood. This sense of both freedom and love, Kristeva (1993, 1996) implies, is made possible in our willingness and ability to take exile, strangeness, and foreignness as a site of creation. It is a peculiar position for a woman and for a foreigner, but also a position for anyone who wants to form an innovative relationship with the self, a kind of relationship always open to the other, the otherness of the other. *[To imply my tradition as relational and Western culture as holding the ideal of freedom, undoubtedly simplifies the complexity of each culture and tends to be reductive. The multiplicity within each culture makes such a generalization impossible. Could such a tension be eased somehow by taking such an angle as only one focus of a kaleidoscope to glance at an ever-changing picture of the self?]*

Great Wall Chinese restaurant, Baton Rouge. I am having dinner there. Finally I feel at peace with Great Wall, the symbol of the Chinese civilization with its own paradoxes. The era of "Central Kingdom" has long become the past, and the need to build a great wall to protect the glorification of the central kingdom has been replaced by the urgent need to open its door, welcoming foreigners and the world.

My own drive into the sense of the self as an independent and autonomous individual, to some degree, is away from the Chinese relational notion of the self and into the Western myth of individualism. The betrayal of my own tradition is also the betrayal of myself. A new self cannot appear from nowhere. Trapped between two very different cultures, I am forever lost until I realize I need to go beyond the "in-between" into a new space. The process of coming to terms with my own strangeness gradually leads me into a third space which gives birth to new senses of self, a self neither confined by national or cultural identity nor losing its own spiritual roots. As dangerous and difficult as it is, the walk to the stranger is a necessary step for imagining life as if it could be otherwise. What is needed to be cautious is not to lose the self in the stranger, nor to become the stranger. Transcending both the self and the stranger, more possibilities in a third space will be opened up.

The traditional relational notion of the Chinese self is still a patriarchal concept in which women are inferior to men. In this sense, a Chinese woman does not really have a self. The Western selfhood in its affirmation of independence and autonomy has a great potential to counteract the possible suppressive role of relationships. But it is also a myth with the veil of patriarchy. Whether relational or autonomous, woman

cannot find her home in both discourses. Beyond traditions in search of a new space, we need to listen to the call from the stranger who is woman.

What is the self? What can Yu Qiuyu's (1992) search for the self during the heyday of the Cultural Revolution teach me as a Chinese woman?

I do not know why this courtyard (lyceum) has touched a certain layer existing deeply in my soul. This layer is not something cultivated in all my born days, but existed much earlier. If there is indeed a previous existence, I must have been here and lived here for a long time. I vaguely feel I have found myself. What is the self? The self is a mysterious courtyard. If you enter it by chance one day but are no longer willing to go out of it, and you feel it is dearer to you than the house you were born in and the current house you are living in, that is your self. (p. 131)

The sense of the self he tries to convey in this message, for me, is deeply rooted in the collective unconsciousness, in the cultural, in the historical, and in his intellectual identity. The connection between a collective past and personal experience in the present forms an obvious contrast with the ahistorical notion of a transcendental self. Reading the affirmation of his search for a scholarly tradition, though, I cannot help but think about whether or not women can claim themselves in a similar way. Considering the great difficulties of tracing women's recorded traditions, can the call from those no name women be heard?

How Far Can a Common Soul Go? The Call from the Ghost of the No Name Chinese Woman

Not as fragrant as flower, as tall as tree
I am a piece of unnoticed little grass
Never feel lonely never feel worried
Look at my companion everywhere
With spring wind and sunshine, I turn into green
River and mountains hold me
Earth mother dearly embraces me
(A Chinese song)

To worry or to smile, such is the choice when we are assailed by the strange; our decision depends on how familiar we are with our own ghosts. (Kristeva, 1991, p. 191)

A piece of unnoticed little grass is what I named myself at college. Little grass is continually reborn with the gentle touch of spring wind, a symbol of the common soul to me. "How far can a common soul go?" is actually the title of a newspaper article. It tells the story of an oversea Chinese woman fighting against cancer to finish her Ph.D. dissertation in the United States. A very touching story. I admire her courage, strength, and bravery to challenge her fate and fulfill a meaningful life under the threat of death. Death had not made her despair, but instead brought her life into blossom. Her story tells me that a common soul can go as far as possible, as long as you follow your heart to continuously transform death into a passion for life. Ever since I read this article, this thought has stayed with me.

A woman's story. Remarkable and full of free spirit. A woman who regards herself as a common girl but shows her persistent pursuit of a rich inner life with an astonishing stamina. Her name is Yuan He. She has a name. She has a story that can be told in the public. There are women's stories that are not allowed to be told, especially those women who transgress the boundary and do not follow social rules. There are women's stories that are deliberately forgotten. There are women's stories that are not recorded simply because they are women not men.

In The Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston (1989) tells the story of a no name Chinese woman. She was Kingston's aunt who jumped into the family well with her illegitimate newborn baby. To give birth to a baby out of wedlock was unforgivable, not only to the family but also to the whole community. The attack from

the community and the silence in the family drove her aunt into suicide on the day of her baby's birth. After her death, her name was never mentioned in the family as if she had never existed. It was a secret that one day her mother revealed to her, warning her to never tell others about it. Kingston had ever since been haunted by her aunt. A tearful ghost not able to tell her own story. A courageous ghost throwing herself and her baby into the family well as a silent protest.

The ghost of this no-name woman has haunted me ever since I read the book. Horrified by her fate, and by many other women's fate in the past and in the present, I am speechless confronting the pain, tears, silent screams, and madness of women who are suppressed by the tyranny of patriarchy. The ghost is also part of me as a Chinese woman. I am carrying her call in my own struggles trying hard to find a space to breathe, to love, and to explore. Is it possible for me to find a women's lyceum wandering around the world one day just as Yu has found his home and his self? Do I need a lyceum? Perhaps what I need is the light, that hidden light shining through generations of women, as Kim Chernin (1994) pictures so well:

An image comes to me. I see generations of women bearing a flame. It is hidden, buried deep within, yet they are handing it down from one to another, burning. It is a gift of fire, transported from a world far off and far away, but never extinguished...I must keep it alive, I must manage not to be consumed by it, I must hand it on when the time comes to my daughter. (p. 16)

Like a hidden flame, women's traditions and stories burn with the hope for every generation of daughters to carry on their legacy, exploring new paths for their grand daughters. To carry mother's legacy, though, does not mean to follow mother's steps. The constant fight between Kim and her mother and their final spiritual compromise tells the story of daughter seeking independence from mother to follow her own calling

without abandoning mother's legacy. Kim's persistence upon her own path is the way she carries the flame her mother has handed on to her.

This burning flame carries the call from those ghosts who try to tell us their stories and invite us to speak for them, and speak for ourselves. As Gerda Lerner (1993) argues, traditional criticism against patriarchy tends to regard women not as active subjects but as passive victims of the system in the West. Such a criticism ignores the fact that women not only have participated in but also have resisted this system actively. Ko (1994) also argues the May Fourth Chinese enlightenment movement depicts women as the victims of the Chinese family who need to be liberated by modernization and freedom. Not listening to women themselves, not understanding how women acted upon the family system to find their own spaces, talking about women as if they were merely passive receivers of traditional institutions would not do justice to women's own struggles. We do not have much in written records--recently there have emerged many feminist studies on ordinary women--about the struggles of those common souls who tried to reach out for light in various forms of resistance, but we can follow our hearts to listen to their call. To renew this light. To hand on this light to the next generation, who will continue our struggles. *[His-tory described in official records is mainly about great men. Because women are usually nameless, it becomes especially necessary to re-write and re-think his(?)tory through common souls. And I do believe the greatest achievement of humanity is accomplished not by heroes but by common wo/men.]*

Those ghosts are actually still part of us. Women are strangers. Women are the Other. The theme of woman as stranger and as other is not uncommon in feminist

literature. As Simon de Beauvoir (1952) points out, men are always regarded as ideal and neutral while women are the Other. To challenge this tradition, de Beauvoir calls women to become autonomous, making transcendent existence possible. Virginia Woolf (1929) is also concerned with the issue of women as the inessential and the inferior, but she deals with the sense of otherness in a somewhat different way. In searching for and constructing a women's literary tradition, she honors a different way of writing which challenges the (male) norm. She also resists asserting an autonomous ego and insists that "I" cannot be separated from the collective. Listening to the call of the ghost in the past, we can live our lives with more awareness and more consciousness.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, Kristeva (1991, 1996) approaches the strangeness and foreignness of woman as a creative site on which the drama of different landscapes of humanity can be staged. Interestingly, she does not argue for the repudiation of the symbolic order of father, nor for returning to the pre-Oedipal mother. For her, language is not necessarily of father; woman as stranger still can still utilize language as a source of innovation. For Kristeva, the refusal of the other is the refusal to recognize one's own otherness and strangeness. In understanding the stranger within oneself, one can tap into the potentiality of new sources, and women's journey is implicated in the process of attending to what has been repressed, to speaking the unspeakable and to representing the unrepresentable.

The ability to converse with the ghosts deep inside ourselves brings us new vistas of life by renewing the light. No-name Chinese woman confronts me with my own past, the past that existed before I was born. Her calling from a collective

unconsciousness shocks me into sudden awareness. She will always be with me as I continue my journey in search of mother's invisible traces.

Dreaming into Healing through Exile

I am walking in the corridor of my department and glancing at posters on the wall. On every poster, I see "teach children how to heal." How strange! I know very well that the caption should be "teach children how to read." How has "read" changed into "heal"? Somehow I am back in my apartment. While I am sitting on my bed in my tiny bedroom, there suddenly appears a screen in front of me, vague but clear enough for me to see what is going on. Two human figures, again vague but clear enough, fight with each other. Soon there are two groups fighting, then several groups fighting together. I sit there petrified. I want to scream: stop fighting!!! But my voice cannot come out and cannot be heard. I struggle very hard. Finally, I wake up. It is a dream. I am exhausted. The bright sunshine flows into my bedroom, touching my sweating face softly.

This dream has stayed with me: Is healing ever possible? Even in exile? Is it possible that exiling itself can lead to the mystical releasing of creativity in healing the wound of loss through transcending both the self and the stranger? How can differences be handled other than by violence? Can we create a home, together with our children, welcoming the stranger instead of fighting against each other?

Exile is a status of not fully belonging to either the old setting or the new setting. It provides an unsettling space where the conventional and the comfortable are challenged, the habitual and *status quo* are questioned, and universal values are suspended. It can become a positive site for creating new forms of life. Yu (1999)

discusses ancient Chinese intellectuals or rebels who were exiled to Ningbo by the government but created their unique sub-culture in a remote place. Reading the poetry written by exiles on the wall of posts on his way to Ningbo, poet of Hangzhou (a Southern city), Ding Peng became happier and happier. He claimed that almost every exile was a gifted scholar and he would enjoy their company. What happened was not merely intellectual mutual stimulation, but also the border-crossings in every possible way. Pro-Qing intellectuals and Anti-Qing rebels went beyond the ethnic oppositions to become faithful friends across differences. The externally imposed status of exile usually brings with it the burden of suffering and pain, which makes their efforts heroic acts of creating a new spiritual world.

Addressing the issue of intellectual exile, Edward Said (1996) attempts to turn exile into a necessary ground on which intellectuals can maintain their critical attitudes towards the taken-for-granted and bring possible innovation into reality. Exile for the intellectual, Said says, "is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with your new home or situation" (p. 53). For Said, exile, in its state of instability and movement, is a condition that intellectuals should choose to live in since it affirms freedom and discovery.

Said admits, "the intellectual as exile tends to be happy with the idea of unhappiness" (p. 53), which leaves the question open: Can intellectual creations in exile heal intellectuals' estrangement from the world? For Said, the condition of not being at home and the feeling of alienation are necessary for the intellectual to play the role of

critic. Kristeva (1989) affirms the importance of symbolic sublimation in psychic fulfillment, but she emphasizes that the semiotic and emotional aspects of language must be incorporated into symbolic representation. Such an interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic in a person's creative process transforms the feeling of alienation into the sublimatory process of meaning making. To consciously choose the status of exile, the intellectual throws himself/herself into a process of constant displacement, requiring intellectual, emotional, and spiritual effort to make the psychic transformation, to understand the self and the world anew. Said's calling for intellectual exile forms an interesting parallel with Greene's (1973) suggestion for "teacher as stranger." Is not a teacher a thinker by her/his creative activities of educating our children?

In a metaphorical sense, exile is a human condition. From a psychoanalytic view, since our childhood, we have begun to experience separation, loss, discontinuity, and even break. Since we are exiled from mother's body or the union between the self and the world, we have been engaged with the world in a more or less estranged way. From this sense, how to cope with exile, to grow into a mature person, becomes an educational issue.

In my dream, the change from "read" into "heal" is an interesting transition. Reading is mainly perceived as an intellectual activity in schools. A common educational poster in which reading is the main focus implies that our schools and our curriculum tend to focus more on what children know than who they are as unique persons. Healing, on the other hand, is a holistic process that involves intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and psychic activities. It implies an educational and curricular

orientation very different from what we are practicing in schools, knowledge-oriented schools, which is the case whether in China or in the United States though in different forms. Our eyes are shut and our ears are deaf. How many children cry inside without being heard? How many children are victims of a troubled family? How many children are speechless without being noticed? How many children feel isolated at schools because they are different from others? The list can be endless. Can we break the silence of children and let them speak out and be in touch with the world in an interactive way? Can we lead these children home (Smith, 2000) by engaging them with constructive and creative activities to release their suppressed energies? Can we help them heal their estrangement from the world? In a more general sense, what kind of curriculum and classroom do we need to construct so that the child is given more opportunities to grow as a unique person in a constructive relationship with others to explore into more human possibilities?

These questions cannot be answered by only focusing on how much children know or what scores they achieve on standardized tests. The heightened criticism of traditional curriculum development models in the United States (Doll, 1993; Pinar, et al., 1995) attempts to bring the lived experiences of both student and teacher back on the stage. In China, since the restoration of national college-entrance examinations, scholars have begun to point out the failure of schools in personal cultivation because of this examination-driven practice. Schools which lacks the experiential, no matter in what concrete forms, cannot succeed in educating the child as the whole person. Not only are the emotional and spiritual growth of the child blocked, but the child's intellectual creativity is also impeded. Normalized, controlling, and dehumanized

schooling in its neglect for the lived experiences of persons may even drive our children into madness, according to William Pinar (2000/1975).

My own experiences as an educator have taught me the difficulty of bringing personal experience into the classroom under current educational systems. In different stages of my life as a student, I witnessed how some of my classmates became outcasts, deviating from the norm one way or another. My concerns for their pain make me dream about an educational romance of bringing these strangers back home.

In my internship as an undergraduate student, teaching in a normal school, a girl drew my attention immediately after I began to teach. She was shy, quiet, and even looked sad, but she was very serious about her studies. I tried to reach out to her in the class, but that never worked, so I talked with her and befriended her after class. One day she told me her stories. She lost her father at the age of two. Her life in the countryside with her widowed mother was tough. She was in tears when she spoke about the hardships, insults, and humiliations she and her mother went through. As young as I was at that time--I did not really know how to help her overcome sadness--I offered my friendship and encouraged her to speak in class. When I saw the shining of her lovely smile or her triumph in the struggle to speak in public, I knew that at least I had managed to bring her some hope. Her story tells me that behind a quiet face there might be a tearful story. For me, the ability to speak is very important because it symbolizes a person's ability to be comfortable with the self while interacting with others. Especially for women who are usually regarded as not having unique voices, the courage to speak out can heal, to some degree, their feeling of estrangement from the world.

The silence of the majority is a problem with which Chinese schools have not been able to deal. Due to traditional class organization, unitary teaching methods, and relatively large class sizes, the teacher only can pay particular attention to top students who constantly speak or disruptive students who disturb the whole class. What is left are those who are usually silent but follow the class. The individual qualities and needs of these students are ignored. More often than not, female students belong to this group. As excellent as my academic records were in junior high and high school, I could have always let myself belong to this group if I had not consciously struggled to speak. When I became a teacher, in all kinds of teaching situations, I tended to pay particular attention to these students and encouraged them to speak.

My interaction with that girl turned out in a positive way; however, my experience with an 8-year-old child was a failure no matter how hard I tried. I was in an experimental school to teach the second graders self-designed oral English. One child was very smart but at the same time very disruptive. He frequently hit or pushed or disturbed his classmates in all sorts of ways in class. The whole class could become a mess simply because of him. I did not like to deal with him by shouting, yelling, or kicking him out of class as other teachers did. I tried to talk with him and wanted to figure out what was so disturbing in his heart. One day in my office, I asked him, "Why do you always bring trouble to your classmates? Do you not want any friends?" He replied quickly, "I do not have any friends." My heart sank. An 8-year-old child. His violent relations with others are deeply rooted in his own insecurity about himself. I tried to reach out for him in different ways. Sometimes it worked; sometimes it did not. I was almost as frustrated as he was. He was a very energetic and intelligent child,

and he could learn almost anything very quickly. Somehow the class arrangement that did not respect the child's individual qualities became his enemy, and he was destined to fight a losing battle. I teased my colleagues, saying that this child should be put in an American classroom [*Am I so sure now?*]. But the heaviness of this failure stays with me. I often wonder what has become of him. Was he able to be more adaptable to classes? Or did he simply leave school? He could have been brilliant and successful, but our current schooling did not offer him enough space to become what he wanted to be.

Healing does not easily happen with love and care although a loving relationship between teacher and student is necessary. David Smith (2000) implies that healing is a practice of discipline through negotiation between self and other, and self and world. From a psychoanalytic view, Deborah Britzman (1998) suggests that healing is a working through of the self which does not try to suppress what losing and being lost have brought but attempts to come to terms with discontinuity, loss, and inner conflicts:

If education indeed can be a cure, it can be a cure only in the psychoanalytic sense: in creating new conditions for the capacity to love, to work, and to learn without invoking more harm and suffering. Conflict, in this story, will not go away. But what might be altered is our capacity to respond. Such work requires, I think, a very different orientation to how such dynamics as life and death can be encountered and rendered through curriculum. (p. 129)

In creating new conditions for working through, learning from, and loving through mourning, healing becomes an art of transforming a person's estrangement into something positive, innovative, and constructive. It is also a holistic process that involves the intellectual, the emotional, the aesthetic, and the spiritual, which demands our schools to shift their focus from test scores to the child's personal journey. We need

to introduce into our schools freedom which allows students to be engaged with their own exploration of both the world and the self. *Currere*, as proposed by Pinar (1976, 1994, 2000/1975, 2001) and Grumet (1976), offers an autobiographical entrance into our inner experience to reflect on the journey we have taken and to renew our efforts of re-experiencing the living present. A transformative curriculum (Doll, 1993) in which teacher, student, and curriculum are all open to a process of evolving, becoming, and emerging opens a space in which a student's personal journey becomes possible.

As a resistance against conventional schooling, Maxine Greene (1973) calls upon teachers to become strangers so that they can "struggle against unthinking submergence in the social reality that prevails" (p. 269). This ability to make the familiar strange is essential to bringing critical thinking and new perspectives into otherwise taken-for-granted reality. Maintaining this status of stranger for teacher, like the status of exile for the intellectual, means being committed to permanent inquiry and respect for students' personal choices, as a challenge to an impersonal and even oppressive school system. Dwayne Huebner (1999) also uses the stranger as a metaphor to call upon the sense of "moreness" and "beyondness" in curriculum so that education becomes a transcendent journey. The stranger is a manifestation of otherness both outside and inside of the self that confronts us and calls us to reach beyond ourselves and imagine new landscapes of human life.

As a Chinese woman who does not have much background in American culture and society, I do not need to choose the status of stranger since I'm actually a stranger to my American students. My own experience of a journey home in a foreign land urges me to encourage my students first to leave home, making the taken-for-granted strange,

and then to return home with new insights and perspectives. The majority of my students are female, white, and middle-class. Comfortable with their own way of life, they resist class discussions on gender and racial issues. I intentionally bring my own stories of encountering cultural differences into the class, and constantly encourage the only African-American female--very brave and courageous--to share her own experiences with the class. Through personal eyes, the class begins to see that there are so many different faces of reality. The silence of the class gradually gives away to lively conversation, and we further discuss how silence itself influences the way we see reality. We talk about the silence on race, gender, homosexuality, the handicapped, and teenage pregnancy at schools and in the society. The breakthrough in the classroom is made possible by personal narrative and conversation, which becomes a way of creating a community in which the stranger is welcome to speak. At the end of the class, many students comment that they have learned a lot from that African-American student. Dreaming into healing through and from exiling, as a woman educator, I envisage teaching as a communal practice of leading students on a transcendent journey of leaving home in order to come home with new gifts of life.

[How many times do I ask myself, " Can I write like this? " Using autobiography in academic writing is new to me. Is it too confessional? Too much self-disclosure? Ironically, Foucault has such a deep distrust of confessional practices that he resists making his writings and interviews personal, although he also claims that whatever he has written is autobiographical. Is confession necessarily part of autobiography? Is it possible that autobiography becomes non-confessional through narratives leading not to the revealing of a hidden truth for the soul's salvation but to a

richer and deeper understanding of reality and a new creation of the self? And is confession necessarily negative after all?

Writing autobiographically is empowering to me even though I still feel unease in exposing my own life to the gaze of the public. Can I not stay at the cultural level? But how can my questioning, coming from my personal experience, of classical psychoanalysis and "in-between" discourse make sense without these personal stories? Disillusioned by the myth of both father and mother, not wanting to be trapped in between, I am on a journey of searching for and creating a "third" space. For whatever reasons, autobiography in the academic world is a writing style very unsettling to me. Will I ever feel ready to present it to the public?]

The Outline of the Dissertation

Why cannot I tell the true shape of the Mountain Lu?
Only because I am wandering so deeply in the mountain.
(Su Shi, *Written on the Wall of Xilin Monastery*, Personal translation)

My own journey of searching for self as a Chinese woman in the United States is complicated by the storm of the "identity crisis" in the West. How could the subject be dead while I am here looking for a more fulfilling self? The interchangeable usage of *subject* and *self* in the West intensifies my puzzle. (In the Chinese context, we do not have "subject" in the Western sense of an entity dominating an object, while we do have "self" which is usually embodied and relational). It has taken me quite some time to understand that the death of the subject implies the critique of a certain version of the subject but does not mean the disappearance of the self all together. When the universal and rational notion of the Cartesian and Kantian subject is challenged, the self is rethought in flux, in relation, and in regard to boundaries. A contemporary

understanding of the self focuses on contextualization, displacement, embodiment, and movement of identity building and rebuilding.

This new portrait of the human self raises critical questions and concerns. In reclaiming the self in relation, is individual autonomy still a necessary condition for personal creation? To displace the self in movement, can identity building in minority groups be possible? To acknowledge the multiplicity within the self, how can relations between self, other, and community be established in such a way that differences can be embraced? For a woman who is traditionally supposed to sacrifice herself for others, what does the discourse about the death of the subject mean? Does it bring more hope for her self-realization or deprive her of the power to change reality and her own life? Does it transform her connections with others, community, and nature in a more constructive way or restrain her in a hierarchically relational order? To address these issues, I believe that the works of Foucault, Confucius and Kristeva can all help us rethink the issue of self and other implicated in a complex network of connections, differences, and creativity.

As an announcer of the death of man, Michel Foucault in his later works returns to the question of the subject. Rejecting the notion of an essential self which implies a transcendental truth to be discovered, he probes an historical construction of subjectivity by and through power relations. The constitution of the subject in a power-knowledge network, according to Foucault, does not preclude the subject's active role in its own continuous becoming. Taking up the space left by the disappearance of man, he attempts to regenerate the notion of the care of the self in the Greco-Roman tradition as an ethical and aesthetic way of self-creation. Foucault's emphasis on creative,

innovative, and transgressive aspects of selfhood in the context of the post-modern critique of the subject is strongly appealing to me, as I am concerned about the inventive re-construction of the self.

While reading Foucault's regeneration of Western traditions, I have been sent back home by this experience of encountering the stranger. Foucault's genealogical analysis of the evolution of the Greco-Roman notion of "the care of the self" into the Christian confessional notion of "know yourself" has a striking parallel with the development of the classical Confucian notion of personal cultivation into the Neo-Confucian notion of the rational self. Both the Greco-Roman tradition and classical Confucianism have a more holistic view of the self, while the Christian "knowing yourself" and Neo-Confucianism subdue the self within the control of absolute truth or moral reason.

While the Enlightenment notion of the autonomous, unitary, and transcendental self is challenged, efforts to reclaim the Confucian self in its human and cosmic relatedness as an alternative to Western individualism have been made (Tu, 1979, 1985; Yao, 1996). The Confucian self does not exist without its relationship with other and nature. Is the Confucian emphasis on the notion of the self as a center of connections still valuable today? If yes, in what way? How can traditions be reclaimed in such a way that transformation of the past can be attempted for new forms of life? How can traditions be renewed in such a way that they can be part in a process of regeneration and renewal? How can one's own horizons be opened up to the otherness and strangeness of different cultures in such a way that the fullness of the self can be brought into shared human understanding?

If Foucault focuses more on the creative aspect of the subject and Confucius more on the relational aspect of the self, how can one build connections and relationships in such a way that individual creativity can be encouraged and cultivated? The relation between self and other through *differences*, implicated in one's relation with oneself, is an important facet of the self I intend to depict. It is particularly important for me not only because I go back and forth between Chinese culture and Western culture, but also because as a woman I do not feel fulfilled in either the Foucaultian subject or the Confucian self. This sense of unfulfillment takes me to Julia Kristeva, a French psychoanalyst and linguist. Playing with the issues of differences, connections, and creativity through her discourse can, I hope, offer a new space in which woman can work through her strangeness to create new subjectivities.

Working through the contradictory yet generative spaces provided by Foucault, Confucius and Kristeva, I attempt to walk through the labyrinth of the self and construct a transformative curriculum in which both teacher and student continuously create anew both themselves and the curriculum.

In Chapter 2, I discuss contemporary critiques of the modern self in the West in order to provide a philosophical context for the following inquiry. I take Foucaultian, feminist, and Chinese philosophical angles in outlining alternative paths to modern subjectivity. The poststructural critique of the subject is characterized by the "linguistic turn" while the Chinese notion of the self does not rely on the centrality of language to show another way of self-construction. Feminist debates about differences, power, and identity are engaged in a difficult negotiation between re-creating woman's uniqueness and entering into the public to transform reality. The problematic of the subject in

contemporary debates shows the complexity of human existence in paving paths for welcoming plurality and diversity both within the self and from others.

In Chapter 3, I focus on Foucault's notion of self-creation to understand the construction of subjectivity after the death of the subject. Foucault turns to the Greco-Roman notion of the care of the self to theorize a transgressive subject. For Foucault, the care of the self can become a practice of freedom that encourages one to pass beyond the limit, to become different, to transform the horizon of the given, and to invent new styles of being. But this notion was shadowed by Christianity and the modernist notion of reason. Foucault's challenge of self-sacrifice and his emphasis on self-care are helpful for women in rethinking self-self relationships. Ironically, Foucault does not address the elitist tendency in the Greco-Roman notion of the care of the self which excludes women.

In Foucault's call for self-creation, his emphasis is on relation one establishes with oneself. Although the relationship between self and other is implied in such a relationship, it is not explicitly addressed. Such a focus leads me back to Confucian traditions which emphasize the relational nature of selfhood. My return to Confucian tradition is not a simple return. It is an effort to realize the potential within Confucianism based upon criticism of its conservative tendency. Chapter 4 focuses on the Confucian notion of personal cultivation in its relational, communal, holistic and cosmic connections. Foucault teaches me to read traditions not necessarily in a continuous way. Along with the institutionalization of Confucianism, I have become interested in how Confucianism became more suppressive when it evolved into Neo-Confucianism.

It is not difficult to see that the Foucaultian self and the Confucian self are in almost utter opposition: They are strangers to each other. Although both Foucault and Confucius do not care about the essence of the self, and subsequently put the self in a process of constant movement, Foucault emphasizes the rupture with traditions and institutions, while Confucianism emphasizes the harmony between persons and society. It is such a striking contrast that I might frame it as an East/West inquiry, although applying such labels as East and West is problematic itself. If the meeting between the two is impossible though necessary, as Derrida phrases it (see Bernstein, 1991), I am less interested in bridging the two than in embracing contradictions in a journey of creating new subjectivities. In the Chinese tradition, contradiction as part of harmony flows through a process of generating dynamics rather than of mere confrontation, just as *yin* and *yang* as mystical opposites, instead of metaphysical entities, interact with each other to generate self, life, and universe. An interactive flow between the Foucaultian subject and the Confucian self can, I argue, lead to creativity of the self set into motion by relations. Such a flow encourages me to think about the possibility of a third space in which the transformation of both Chinese traditions and Western traditions is a necessary step creating new subjectivities.

According to Zhang Shiyong (1995), the post-modern challenge to the subject in the West is in the context of Western culture, language, and modes of life, a context not applicable to the Chinese situation. While the West attempts to go beyond itself, the lack of subjectivity in Chinese traditions must be challenged in order to search for more spaces for individuals and respect for differences. According to Zhang, the main task of Chinese philosophy is to establish the principle of subjectivity without giving up the

oneness between universe and humanity. Yang Dachun (1998) also speaks about the necessity of understanding post-modernism and poststructuralism in the Western context without abandoning the task of critiquing Chinese traditions. Where will the complexity and ambiguity of shuttling back and forth between Chinese culture and Western culture take me?

In addition to an East/West focus, this dissertation also takes a woman's perspective. I conduct gendered critiques of Foucault's discourse and Confucianism. These gendered critiques guide me to Kristeva's analysis in Chapter 5, in which issues of connection, difference, and creativity are addressed. Though rarely claiming herself a feminist, but frequently critical of certain feminist discourses and practices in both France and the United States, Kristeva nevertheless attempts to negotiate a difficult space in which femininity can be more fully expressed in a creative interaction with masculinity. To some degree, she also privileges the position of woman as stranger who can create new forms of signification to bring both the semiotic and the symbolic into creative interplay, reaching new levels of psychic, intellectual, and aesthetic fulfillment. Kristeva's affirmation, through psychoanalysis, of otherness and foreignness within the self leads to a reconstruction of community. She strongly resists the notion of community imposed by social order; on the contrary, she advocates a "paradoxical community" in which exiles, strangers, and foreigners are welcome. Such a community is a community in which connections are constructed through and by differences and singularities. Such a communal notion is very different from the Confucian concept, offering much more space for the creation of individuality and, I suggest, providing more hope for the possibility of living together without violence. I

am particularly fascinated by her discourse on the stranger and women, which is highly suggestive for my journey as a foreign woman with an intellectual pursuit. On the other hand, her psychoanalytic notion of a universal foundation of subjectivity is problematic in the contexts of the Chinese language and self.

To negotiate a space in which Foucault, Confucius, and Kristeva each make their unique contribution to a complex understanding of the subject is a difficult project. They contradict and challenge each other in ways that make compromise almost impossible. Perhaps this blending of striking differences is what one needs to embrace in a post-modern age. Situating myself both in China--in a period of great transformation--and in the United States as a woman in the field of curriculum studies, my travels across the ocean and through discourses and texts has already put me in an unsettling position, in contradictory gestures, and in a situation of "aporia" (Derrida, 1993). Will my attempt to go beyond both--a creative embracing of aporia--ever be possible? For Derrida (1993), aporia is in the state of constant dilemma without final solution. It is affirmative through the impossible and an event of "coming without *pas*" (p. 8), with the possibility of responsibility dwelling in this affirmation. This attentiveness to the alterity of the other is what I need to live with in experiencing aporia without being lured into final closure. Through dwelling in the space of aporia, I am called upon to make my own response to the "double duty" of both self and other in order to experiment with new possibilities and to journey into a third space which embraces and transforms conflicts to make possible the creation of both self and other. Foucault says that he writes in order to become somebody else. My hope for this project is to travel to a new space of continuous journeying by writing through

ambiguity and dwelling in an im/possible home. It is also an educational journey, as Dwayne Huebner (1999) elaborates so powerfully through the language of the stranger, the aesthetic, the spiritual, and the communal.

In the context of my second trip back to China, in Chapter 6, I elaborate a transformative curriculum (Doll, 1993) in which elements of the Foucaultian, Confucian and Kristevian self are in constant interplay, generating creative spaces for the self-transformation of teachers and students through both connectivity and difference. Writing autobiographically through notions of self-in-relation, self-in-process, and self-in-alterity, traveling among different cultures, philosophies, ways of life, and educational concerns, I elaborate a curriculum for the creative transformation of selfhood. Situated in dynamic and complex cultural connections, social interactions, and cosmic processes, a new sense of the self becomes richer, fuller, and deeper in shifting intersubjective spaces which honor differences and alterity. The call from the stranger resonant in and through curriculum is to invite both teachers and students on a journey of co-creating selves, others, and the world out of interactive connections. Curriculum is also a journey home to release imagination and creativity to create a new classroom in which strangers are welcome to play together. Such a journey home is a journey into a third space in which curriculum shifts through conflicting doubles to become self-creative and to transform each participant. Drawing upon both Western, especially American, curriculum theorists and Chinese educational scholars, I problematize the taken-for-granted, and ask educators to think the unthought, speak the ineffable, and live in a different way.

In short, both utilizing and problematizing notions of stranger, home, journey, and self through cross-cultural philosophical inquiry, gender analysis, psychoanalysis, and autobiography, this research attempts to re-think inter/subjectivity in an age when traditions and boundaries are challenged. When the stranger is both inside and outside, home is a process of creating spiritual places, journey is both inward and outward, and the multiplicity of the self situated at the intersection of gender and culture takes one to create a third space in which new subjectivities can be created through transformative interconnections. In an increasingly diversified yet globalized society, we cannot live a meaningful life without dealing with issues of how to live with differences and multiplicities in a constructive and creative way. Whether differences are gendered or cultural or at the intersection of gender and culture, I suggest that we need to create third spaces in which conflicting doubles can embrace and transform each other to reach a higher level of the self integrated by multiplicity. Such an integration of the self--as what the Chinese dragon of the many-in-one shows--is not a final closure but is open to conflicts, differences, and movements which create another level of integration. The self and the stranger, the Confucian relational self and the Foucaultian creative self, femininity and masculinity, the Kristevian paradoxical community and the Confucian harmonious community, and the semiotic and the symbolic, all can interact and transform each other within each conflicting double through a third space to open all kinds of multiple landscapes of inter/subjectivity. Situated in a third space, curriculum as a journey of self-creation through dynamic interrelationships and openness to the alterity of both self and other offers teachers and students a transformative space of engaging dialogue, conversation, and imagination to reach new shores of life. Such is a

continuous, ever-evolving and unfinished journeying in the company of the stranger.

“Let us go” (Bei, 1991) together to journey into a third space which embraces creative transformation of selfhood.

Notes

1. Since the space I am writing in is itself contestable and sometimes contradictory, I hesitate to make any generalizations without questions. What is in the parentheses and in italics is what I am pondering and questioning. This way I intend to show multiple voices--in Mikhail Bakhtin's terms, polyphonic dialogue within the self and with others--without influencing the flow of the main body of text.
2. I indeed take time to think about how to translate Chinese names. It is customary to translate Chinese names according to the Western naming order in English, which is first name before family name. But names of famous Chinese scholars are translated according to the Chinese naming order, which is family name before first name. In order to avoid confusion, I use the Chinese naming order for Chinese names. The more important consideration for such a choice is that I believe different naming orders to some degree reflect different notions of the self. The Chinese naming pattern emphasizes the relational aspect of a person while the Western naming pattern emphasizes the individuality of a person. Although it may sound farfetched, I prefer to keep the Chinese naming custom as it is, in its *difference*.
3. Aware of the problematic of using the term "Western culture," I still use it in a comparative sense--a skewed comparison since I do not use the term "Eastern culture" as I understand more about the differences within Eastern culture. Coming from Chinese culture, my take on Western culture stays more at the level of theorizing about a culture different from mine than experiencing different cultures within Western culture. Perhaps as an outsider, what I can offer is my thoughts as a result of such unbalanced travel between Chinese culture and Western culture(s). Furthermore, my discussions involve Western thinkers who are from different countries, which makes it more difficult to distinguish cultural differences.
4. The Analects, 2.4
5. The Analects, 2.4.

CHAPTER 2: THE PROBLEMATIC OF THE HUMAN SELF

The first day of my arrival in the United States. Surprisingly, it felt like I had just traveled to another city in China, for example, from Harbin to Shanghai or from Shanghai to Harbin. The next day, awakening from a long sleep, I looked through the window, listening to the music produced by the rain on palm leaves. I was struck by a sudden moment of excitement from crossing the border. But for only a moment. To move is not that unfamiliar to me, though this time it was dramatic; I had moved to another country. At the time, I did not anticipate the storm of “identity crisis” that the West would bring to my life. The search for self had sent me across the ocean to experience another way of life. Envisioning an exploration of the Western selfhood, I was quite unprepared for the “deconstruction” of Western traditions. So began my journey into the unknown, the uncertain, and the unconscious.

Critiques of the Subject of Reason

As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end . . . one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.
(Michel Foucault, 1970, p. 387)

To relocate and refigure the portrait of the human self in the recent decades within the Western philosophical field is not only difficult but also confusing. The transition from Rene Descartes' and Immanuel Kant's transcendental self that focuses on universal subjectivity to the notion of self in existentialism and phenomenology that focuses on the uniqueness and the particularity of individuals has already been pushed to the limit of questioning the existence of the subject itself. The “death of the subject” has quickly become a sort of slogan, but the cluster of discourses around this claim is

quite complex and sometimes contradictory. We can hear, for example, Michel Foucault's announcement of the death of man, Roland Barthes' litany on the death of the author, Jacques Derrida's call for the deconstruction of the subject, Jacques Lacan's articulation of a decentering self in language, and Richard Rorty's celebration of a contingent self. Regardless of the highly diversity of these discourses, they share the efforts to problematize a transcendental, unitary, and essential subject in a continuous history in modernistic Western thought.

Since I will return to Foucault's later works on rebuilding the subject in Chapter 3, I will focus on his critiques of the subject of reason here as a springboard for further analysis. Furthermore, Foucault is a European, indeed French, philosopher traveling through history and weaving his works through the pre-modern, the modern, and the post-modern. Considering the unfinished project of modernization in China, I have had a hard time situating my own concerns in post-modern discussions. That is one reason why Foucault's discourses have such a special appeal to me, although he focuses mainly on Western civilization.

In Sources of the Self (1989), Charles Taylor depicts how the modern identity is constructed and shows the complexity and even contradictions within the subject of modernity. On the one hand, he traces the notion of reason from Plato's rational self-mastery through the inward turn of Augustine to Descartes' disengaged subject in reason, the intensified disengagement in Locke's "punctual self," to Kant's pure rational being, showing how the initial emphasis on reason develops into the modern notion of the instrumental and rational self in a universal and transcendent sense. On the other hand, this is only one facet of the modern self. Within the same historical tendency

toward interiority, another Enlightenment philosopher, Montaigne, emphasizes the originality and particularity of each person in flux and inaugurates the modern movement of self-expression and self-discovery. His respect for the unique differences embodied in each individual, and his call for an engagement in our particularity, is in sharp contrast to Cartesian disengaged science of the subject in search of universal human nature, although both turn to reflectivity to search for the self. Taylor names Montaigne as an initiator of "another kind of modern individualism" (p. 182) in contrast to Cartesian individualism. He further points out is a third facet of individualism, subjective commitment. The idea of the modern subject as autonomous and independent, committed to moral and political life, was developed from religious contexts, political atomist/instrumental complexes, and modernist dualism.

Foucault's critique of the modern subject is embedded within his archaeological studies of knowledge and genealogy of power relations and the intersection of subjectivity construction in both truth games and the circulation of power exercises. The complex web of knowledge, power, and subjectivity that Foucault attempts to weave, sometimes in seemingly contradictory patterns, unmask the hidden repressive (in his early works) and disciplinary (in his later works) faces of the modern self, and further moves to a new notion of subject which is transgressive yet not transcendental in a metaphysical sense. The three aspects of modern individualism Taylor outlines are all challenged in his daunting project, although his later works on the subject have certain traces of Montaigne's notion of a particular and original self, while rejecting his search for authenticity in the self. Foucault's relationship to Kant is also ambiguous. While

attacking the Enlightenment ideal of rationality and autonomy, in his later works, Foucault nevertheless returns to Kant for a critical ontology of the self.

In his first influential book, Madness and Civilization (1973/1961), Foucault criticizes the Western ideal of reason by tracing the history of madness and how madness has been silenced in the age of reason. In the Renaissance, madness particularly stayed at the margins but was not excluded or isolated. "Mad" people were allowed a certain space, though in an exile sense, which can be shown in the legend of "Boats of Fools." The coming of the Classical Age brought a very different relationship between madness and reason. The confinement of mad people was intended to exclude, suppress, and silence madness, while mad people stayed at the zero point of humanity and morality. Foucault comments:

Here reason reigned in the pure state, in a triumph arranged for it in advance over a frenzied unreason. Madness was thus torn from that imaginary freedom which still allowed it to flourish on the Renaissance horizon. Not so long ago, it had floundered about in broad daylight: in *King Lear*, in *Don Quixote*. But less than a half-century, it had been sequestered and, in the fortress of confinement, bound to Reason, to the rules of morality and to their monotonous nights. (p. 64)

In the modern age, madness as a mental disease or a psychological disorder became the discursive object of medical science. Free from the confinement, however, "mad" people have been sent to the asylum for therapeutic intervention and moral correction. The relation between reason and madness has shifted somehow: The madman has lost the tool of reason, and through working on his self-consciousness in the asylum he can "return to his awareness of himself as a free and responsible subject, and consequently to reason" (p. 247). The modern treatment of madness is also related to the notion of truth that intends to study the madness scientifically in order to reveal

what is hidden beneath the surface. In Foucault's phrase: "the madman is obliged to objectify himself in the eyes of reason as the perfect stranger, that is, as the man whose strangeness does not reveal itself" (p. 249-50). For Foucault, such a scientific pursuit of truth was actually driven by the moral and social control exercised by the judgment of reason. Thus madness is silenced and controlled in another way.

Foucault's historical study of madness shows how the division between reason and unreason, with the former dominating the latter, plays an excluding and suppressive role in constructing the subject. Although concrete forms of control can be different, for example, from exile to exclusion and correction, the mechanisms of subjugating the Other, in this case madness, reveal different power strategies. In modern society, while mad people are objectified by reason to become strangers, otherness within the self is also objectified and thereby excluded. The birth of the modern subject through the dualism between reason and unreason comes at the expense of human passion and knowledge at the limit of human experience.

Later, Foucault became critical of his own work on madness. His discourses on power relationships in Discipline and Punish (1977) and History of Sexuality (1978) shows more complex relationships among power, truth, and subjectivity. The position he took in Madness and Civilization on the domination of reason over unreason was replaced by a more fluid, circulating notion of power as not only repressive but also productive. I will return to discussion of this issue later on. First, I want to comment briefly on Foucault's treatment of Descartes in Madness and Civilization and the famous debate between Derrida and Foucault (Boyne, 1990; Melehy, 1997).

While a detailed discussion is beyond my intention, the different angles Foucault and Derrida adopt towards the critique of reason and Foucault's subtle shift of his position as a result of this debate is certainly an interesting demonstration of diversified paths to the Other. Foucault's analysis of Descartes does not occupy a significant place on the surface. The several relevant pages are even not included in the abridged English translation. However, as Boyne (1990) points out, the role of the Cartesian rational self in silencing and excluding modern madness is clearly implicit in the book as a whole.

Foucault's efforts to trace the history of madness in order to break the silence and speak from the other side of reason is attacked by Derrida (1978/1963), who questions the possibility of speaking of madness beyond reason, since language is already embedded in the realm of reason. While Derrida believes that reason can only be questioned within the discourse of text through deconstruction, he argues that Foucault's "archeology of silence" intends to attribute the status of the subject to madness, which is "a Cartesian gesture for the twentieth century" (p. 55). Situating Foucault's discourse in his own political commitments at this time (Miller, 1993), Derrida's charge, I believe, is not unconvincing.

Foucault (1979/1966) delivered his reply to Derrida entitled by "My body, this paper, this fire," defends his own reading of Descartes Meditations to show the philosophical exclusion of madness. He charges that Derrida reduces discursive practices to mere textual reading. Edward Said (1978) suggests that their debates show two "exemplary positions" in which one focuses on textuality itself and the other approaches textual analysis through discursive practices in history, power, knowledge,

and society. These are two different emphases in the critical project of the modern subject.

Actually, Foucault shifts his position in his subsequent works, and he explicitly criticizes Madness and Civilization. The dualism between unreason and reason he originally sets up is dissolved in his discussions of other differences such as criminals. In Archeology of Knowledge, he (1972) comments that Madness and Civilization "is still close to admitting an anonymous and general subject of history" (p. 16). Not taking up again the task of constructing a general subject, Foucault no longer attempts to imply any essential notion of the Other to be spoken of. This is a more radical break with the Cartesian subject.

In The Order of Things, Foucault (1970) turns to analysis of anthropology through discourse and proclaims the disappearance of "man." He argues that "man" is the recent invention of European history, the result of the major *epistemic* shift from the classical age to the modern age. The change in modes of knowledge and language leads to the birth of Man:

When natural history becomes biology, when the analysis of wealth becomes economics, when, above all, reflection upon language becomes philology, and Classical *discourse*, in which being and representation found their common locus, is eclipsed, then, in the profound upheaval of such an archaeological mutation, man appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows: enslaved sovereign, observed spectator. . . (p. 312)

Man's ambiguous position leads Foucault to the analytic of finitude: Man appears in the space of modern knowledge but with finitude. This analytic of finitude applies to the doubles that constitute man: the empirical and the transcendental, the *cogito* and the unthought, and the retreat and return of the origin. The separation

between the empirical and the transcendental derives from Kant who wants to found empirical knowledge on transcendental knowledge. Such a doublet, Foucault believes, brings the birth of modernity: "the threshold of our modernity is situated not by the attempt to apply objective methods to the study of man, but rather by the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet which was called *man* "(p. 319). But such a separation is impossible to maintain, and the only way to abandon this effort is to ask whether or not "man" exists. The double of the *cogito* and the unthought is shown in man's unsuccessful efforts to try to know his own shadow, or his twin, just as in man's futile efforts to separate the empirical and the transcendental. The unthought is beyond the reach of the *cogito*, and is, in fact, the Other:

Man and the unthought are, at the archaeological level, contemporaries. Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration in the *episteme* without thought at the same time discovering . . . unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught. The unthought . . . is, in relation to man, the Other: the Other that is not only a brother but a twin, born, not of man, nor in man, but beside him and at the same time, in an identical newness, in an unavoidable duality. (p. 326)

The search for incorporating the Other within man implies a certain violence and the neglect of the unthought's exterior status in relation with man. However, the effort of mastering and controlling the Other makes the shadow elude the very effort to bring everything into light. There is always something more to stay in the shadow. The third doublet, the retreat and return of the origin, according to Foucault, is a historical question. In a similar manner, Foucault shows that the origin is unreachable, although modern thought is preoccupied with the original: the origin reaches forever further and further into the past. "It is always against a background of the already begun that man is able to reflect on what may serve for him as origin Origin, for man, is much

more the way in which man in general, any man, articulates himself upon the already-begun of labor, life and language" (p. 330).

Foucault notes that these three doublets define man's modes of being. To show the double nature of modern thought in its impossible search for the transcendental, the *cognito*, and the origin by the analytic of finitude, Foucault challenges modern reason from within: "We attempt to question afresh the limits of thought, and to renew contact in this way with the project for a general critique of reason" (p. 342). Its nature of exclusion and suppression is also suggested: "modern thought is advancing towards that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself" (p. 328).

For Foucault, in Western culture man and language cannot appear simultaneously because one dominates the other or *vice versa* during different historical periods. In the Classical age, the central role of language in its discourse of representation excludes the possibility of a "science of man." In the nineteenth century, the division of language leads to the birth of man, or in Foucault's term, "the anthropological sleep." The "linguistic turn" in the twentieth century indicates the return of discourse, implying that man will retreat from the central space of knowledge and that discourse will replace the position of man. Foucault's prediction came true in Western thought in the latter half of the twentieth century, especially in poststructuralism and post-modernism, although he resists calling himself a post-modernist.

The role of language is key to the decentering movement of the subject in poststructuralism. Early in 1963, Foucault (1977b) comments, "the breakdown of philosophical subjectivity and its dispersion in a language that dispossesses it while

multiplying it within a space created by its absence is probably one of the fundamental structures of contemporary thought" (p. 42). In "What is Author," Foucault (1984/1969) directly challenges the authorial subject and its affiliation with individualization in Western thought. For Foucault, "in writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears" (p. 320). However, to declare the disappearance of the author is not enough. Foucault encourages us to watch for opportunities and openings in the space left empty by such a disappearance. He turns to "author function" and discourse analysis to understand the multiplicities of self, discursive practices in institutional systems, and discontinuity in historical analyses of discourse. As a complex function of discourse, the subject is deprived of the founding role modernity conferred upon it. However, such a claim does not intend to deny the place of the human subject, but rather "to grasp the subject's points of insertion, modes of functioning, and system of dependencies" (p. 118). The question of the subject is precisely what Foucault returns to in his later works. Here he already hints at the future shift of his research direction that is often seen as contradictory to his earlier critique. I like to see them more as complementary (with paradoxes) than purely oppositional. I will return to this issue in the next chapter.

In both Punish and Discipline (1977a) and History of Sexuality, Foucault's discourse on power, knowledge, and subject is more complex, fluid, and circulating than his earlier works. Power no longer plays an exclusive and suppressive role: On the contrary, power can be productive. Power is exercised rather than possessed. Power

circulates not only from up to down, but also from down to up, in a network of relations. Such a decentralized conception of power in its close relationship to knowledge destabilizes the Cartesian subject who knows. Here I will focus on Punish and Discipline to show how disciplinary power in Foucault's analysis is exercised to normalize the human soul by operating upon the body.

In Punish and Discipline, Foucault (1977a) theorizes on the birth of prison as a modern mode of punishment and shows how disciplinary power pervades the whole of society in shaping the individual through normalizing practices. According to Foucault, there are three modes of punishment. The first involves the torture of the body of the condemned in public to show the power of the monarch. The second is a representational mode of correction in which reformers labor to change the criminal so prisoners can return to reason. The third is a new way of shaping and constituting the individual: the prison with its disciplinary control.

Foucault defines discipline in its relation to the body. "These methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called 'disciplines'" (p. 137). Discipline produces "docile bodies" through arrangements of space, time, coding of activities, and the combination of these forces to impose order, efficiency, obedience, and usefulness upon the individual. The body becomes a machine to be controlled and utilized. The adoption of discipline first derives from the army and then is transferred to the prison, as an exemplar of discipline. Discipline is also pervasive in factories, schools, asylums, and other social institutions as an instrument for training the human body.

This training of the body is implicated in the three instruments of disciplinary power: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination. Observation as hierarchical coercion makes those being observed (such as criminals, pupils, soldiers, workers, etc.) aware that their behaviors are seen by authorities. Normalizing judgment as a technique of control intends to keep the distinction between the normal and the abnormal so that individuals are pressured to conform to the same model, standard, and criteria: "The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*" (p. 183; emphasis in original). This examination combines the techniques of both observation and normalization to classify, rank, and standardize individuals to fit into an established hierarchical social order. It also makes the creation of new fields of knowledge possible, for example, pedagogy as a "science" of pupils. Here the connection between power and knowledge and the productive potential of discipline is made explicit.

The prison as an institution of both punishing and reforming criminals who go off the normal track brings a new style of architecture: One of the most famous is Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. The panopticon is a strong symbol of discipline, with the observer invisible but the observed visible everywhere. Panopticism, as Foucault phrases it, combines both exclusion and discipline. On the one hand, criminals are isolated; on the other hand, they are disciplined so they may return to the norm. The norm not only points to the distinction between good and bad, but also implies a truth about the self. So the return to the norm is not merely moral correction; it is also an adjustment of the knowing subject. Although panopticism does not directly face the

individual, like an invisible hand or an omnipresent (yet absent) eye, it regulates, differentiates, and controls every individual and put him/her under surveillance. Under such a complex physical and psychological arrangement, power does not move from above to below or from center to periphery, but circulates in all directions.

Again, we can see that Foucault's notion of power is no longer one of repression and exclusion. Usually Foucault's depiction of a disciplinary society provokes his critics to object to the pessimism of his political project. But in fact Foucault never says that disciplinary control makes resistance impossible. To the contrary, he does not think of discipline as something unitary: "ultimately what presides over all of these mechanisms is not the unitary functioning of an apparatus or an institution, but the necessity of combat and the rules of strategy" (p. 308). Here he asserts the necessity and inevitability of resistance. What he is suspicious of is grounding resistance upon universal normative criteria according to liberal principles. Like power or discipline, resistance is not centered but spreads out in the network of power-knowledge-subject.

In short, Foucault's archeological investigation of "subjugated knowledge" and his genealogical analysis of the power-knowledge-subjectivity network in Western civilization unmask the other faces of the modern self to challenge the myth of the autonomous, unitary, transcendental, Western subject. He traces how institutions and society have shaped individuals so that the search for the essence of the self becomes futile. The autonomy of the subject, liberated from its historical, social, and political possibility, is unattainable. The dream of the transcendental is also trapped in its own impossibility. The unitary notion of identity cannot sustain the multiplicity of language and self. He further shows how individuals become plural, just as power and discipline

are themselves plural. According to Foucault, the subject of reason suppresses its own otherness within, violently controlling others who do not fit into the norm imposed externally. When the relationship between self and other is violent, one cannot form a fluid, open, and constructive relationship with oneself. Such an intertwined relationship between self and other makes it necessary to question the violent nature of the modern Western subject. Perhaps a meaningful step to take next, after declaring "the death of the subject," is to play with the empty space left by such a disappearance. That is what Foucault does in his later works. I will take up this issue in the next chapter.

Western Individualism and the Chinese Self

While the notion of the modern Western subject is under attack, some attention has led to Eastern philosophy, which has usually been ignored. There have been several efforts to link poststructuralism and influence from the East. Derrida's relationship with Indian philosophy (Coward, 1990), and the connection between deconstruction and Taoism (Fu, 1992; Yeh, 1983) have been theorized. There is also speculation on the interaction between Foucault's discourse and Buddhism. In the field of curriculum theory, Eastern traditions such as Taoism, Buddhism/Zen, and Confucianism, and Eastern practices such as meditation, silence, *Taiji*, *yoga*, and their curriculum implications have been discussed (Hwu, 1993, 1998; Smith, 1996). Eastern philosophy is an impossible label to contain such a variety of different cultures, thoughts, and religions. As a Chinese, my efforts to look at Western individualism from outside will largely be drawn from a Chinese background, so I will focus on the Chinese self to show a different way of understanding and living reality, self, and the world.

To critique Western tradition as a Chinese woman from the Chinese tradition is a very ambiguous if not an impossible position. In a strict sense, it would not be a critique, since each tradition follows its own historical meanderings in its own contexts. While each has its own strength, each also has its own weakness, and such an intertwining of triumph and failure cannot be separated in any easy way. In other words, one's strength is precisely its own weakness and *vice versa*. To use one against another, one usually runs the risk of falling into certain traps of cultural and political conservatism while expanding only one aspect of a preferred tradition. For example, the revival of Confucianism both in Mainland China and in Singapore worries critical scholars who regard it as a conservative move to political repression. While the arrogance of the modern Western self in its neglect and exclusion of other traditions must be challenged both from within and outside, such a challenge, for me positioned on the edge, neither within (of course) nor outside (while I am receiving Western higher education), must be conducted in a way critical of both. The newly-found interest in Chinese traditions such as Taoism in the West has a certain romantic flavor which fits Westerners' imagination of finding an exit for their own problems. Exercising a certain caution in approaching my own traditions, I want to point out that the notion of the modern subject is indeed a Western invention. It cannot be regarded as a universalized concept for humanity, especially considering the differences in time and space, and given the plurality of modes of life in the West. After I discuss Chinese conceptions of self, society, and universe, I will move to feminist critiques of the rational self to understand how gender differences play important roles in constructing subjectivity.

The universal and transcendental claim of the modern subject has lost its metaphysical grounding.

Just as Western individualism has multiplicities, the Chinese self is also contradictory and differentiated. The official ideology of Marxism after 1949 and the influence of the West in contemporary China after the open-door policy was implemented in the late 1970s make the notion of the Chinese self much more complicated. I am not going to address this issue here. Traditionally, the Chinese self has three main elements: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, the former two originating in China and the third coming from India. Usually Taoism is regarded as in opposition to Confucianism, while Buddhism as a religion has a much stronger transcendental conceptualization than do the other two. The differences among the three do not prevent Chinese people from embodying each of them in their ways of life. A Chinese scholar might be a Confucian in the daytime and a Taoist at night. Ignoring their differences, Western commentary often regards all of them as "selfless." As I understand it, this sense of selfless can be true compared to Western standards, since there is no dichotomy between subject and object as the former dominates the latter in the Chinese self. On the other hand, the Chinese have their visions of selfhood. Confucianism situates the self in family, in society, and in the world while Taoism emphasizes a person's freedom from rituals and social constraints. The "authentic self" as an ideal state of the individual in Zen Buddhism transcends the opposition between the self and the external world to enlarge individuality into a cosmic whole. Without the dichotomy between subject and object, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism all share an embodied view of human life and reality, a view which questions

Western dualisms such as mind and body, rationality and emotion, reason and intuition, and humanity and nature. They show a holistic and ecological view of selfhood. Furthermore, the emphasis on harmony and balance, though different in different traditions, is also uniquely Chinese. Harmony, however, does not exclude contradictions. Usually it is achieved by the continuous flow between polarities. The three faces of the Chinese self are intertwined yet at the same time keep their own unique shapes. Actually the spirit of Taoism and Buddhism since the Tang and Song Dynasties has permeated Confucianism because Confucians accepted the challenge of modifying Confucian principles. I will discuss briefly Confucian and Taoist perspectives on the self in contrast to Western individualism.

Yao Xinzong (1996) compares the Western modern self and the Confucian self. He investigates the Western metaphysical sense of the self as substance, the epistemological sense of the self as the mind, and the psychological sense of the self as consciousness. In contrast to such conceptions, the Confucian self presents a holistic and process-oriented view of humanhood.

According to Yao, the understanding of the self as a kind of metaphysical entity not subject to change is absent in Confucianism. Confucian principles such as *Ren* or *Tao* are not presented in the sense of substance, but must be cultivated continuously throughout a person's life:

In general, the [Confucian] self is considered not constant nor substantial but relative and changeable. The self is understood neither as an entity set in opposition to the world nor as a substantial being distinct from all others. The identity of each person is not in his or her independent existence, but in his or her relations to the cosmic principles, to other people, to social communities, and to his or her own moral cultivation by which the self is brought into maturity. (p. 183)

Yao's comment is echoed in Hall and Ames' (1987) suggestion about the contrast between the Western transcendental tradition and the Chinese immanent perspective. According to them, while transcendental principles define the Western essential nature of the self, the Confucian immanent view of the world situates the self within its concrete interactions in particular contexts. In such a process of coming to maturity, one's dispositions, characters, and behaviors are continuously cultivated and transformed toward the full realization of humanity. Confucian selfhood is a life-long project which unfolds an endless process of self-realization, as Confucius' comment on the continuous flow of the water shows.¹

The Cartesian concept of the self as mind, according to Yao, is very different from the Confucian concept of the self in unity between body and mind. The compatible notion of the mind to Confucians would be *xin* (heart or heart/mind) which, however important, is not the essence of the self but less than the self. Even taking the importance of *xin* into consideration, *xin* as a holistic notion for the human capacities for thinking, feeling, and being requires much more than a thinking mind. Cartesian dualism does not exist in the Confucian self.

As Yao further points out, a deep psychological concept of the self is also absent in Confucianism: Confucians "in general did not go deep into the division between consciousness and sub-consciousness, or between consciousness and self-consciousness" (p. 185). The Western experience of psychic struggle so central to Westerners' sense of selfhood is not in the Confucian self to any significant extent.

In conclusion, Yao believes the contemporary critique of the traditional Western self is echoed in a renewed interest in the Confucian self. In his long-time devotion to

regenerating Confucianism, Tu Wei-ming (1985) affirms Yao's claim about the contemporary significance of the Confucian self, arguing that Confucianism can "provide a fresh perspective on the idea of the self without evoking sentiments about individualism" (p. 11). Tu (1996) believes that Confucianism can make its unique contribution to go beyond the Enlightenment mentality, not only for the West, but also for the East.

Tu argues that Confucian self-cultivation is an open, dynamic, holistic process in which the self is constantly engaged with the other, whether this other is another person, the external world, nature or cosmos, so that the self can be continuously expanded, renewed, and transformed. The Western sense of individuals as isolated entities or private ego cannot be found in the Confucian self. Fulfillment for the individual is impossible without relating to others in a social and moral context. As the positive sense of the Confucian Golden rule in The Analects states, "The man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, seeks also to enlarge others."² (The Golden Rule is: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."³)

Because the Confucian focus on communal aspect of the self can be easily submerged into a hierarchical system of society, Confucianism is very often charged with promoting social hierarchy and suppressing individuality. Historically, the institutionalization of Confucianism did play such a role. Philosophically, the emphasis on the commonality of humanity tends to constrain creative expressions of individuality. As Wm. Theodore de Bary (1991) comments, "as a way of life and a continuing discourse, Confucianism was a problematical enterprise from its inception,

and, as it responded to the challenges of each age, addressing some perhaps better than others, it had both successes and failures" (p. xi-xii). In approaching the problematic of Confucianism, I would argue that there are inner paradoxes within the discourse, as probably every discourse has, that still support a strong subjective self (though not in the sense of the Western subject) in contrast to the impression that Confucians only obey the rules of authorities.

Confucian self-cultivation emphasizes the importance of moral integrity, human dignity, and personal strength in fulfilling the mission of becoming noble men. A Confucian must have unyielding courage to resist the temptation of wealth or fame and the imposition of authorities in order to preserve the Way (Tao). The Way is not perceived as an external norm that sets a fixed standard of perspectives and behaviors, but must be cultivated and realized internally. Such an internality of the Way demands that a person seek the inner power to cope with difficulties such as poverty, hardship, or adversity. "What the noble man seeks is in himself. What the inferior man seeks is in others."⁴ The ability to remain unaffected by external influences such as wealth, honor, and fame while keeping focused on pursuing and manifesting the Way is essential for self-realization, and the struggle against despotism and authoritarianism to be loyal to the self is a treasured virtue for Confucians. Confucius says: "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and with my bent arm for a pillow, I still can enjoy myself. Riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness are floating clouds to me."⁵

In Confucian traditions, as Ambrose King (1985) argues, a "Chinese individual's relation with others is neither independent nor dependent but *interdependent*. Thus, the individual self is not totally submerged in relationships. On

the contrary, the individual has considerable social and psychological space for action" (p. 63). Such an interdependent space for the self to come into maturity and the focus for inner spiritual fulfillment (in other words, "sageliness within") are concerns of both Confucianism and Taoism, though they pursue different paths. One of the striking differences between the two is that Confucianism emphasizes the importance of the sociality of selfhood while Taoists search for personal freedom through nature, not through society. Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi's ridicule of the Confucian principles of benevolence, rituals, and righteousness is famous. It is not surprising that Taoism is often regarded as opposite to Confucianism. But, according to Tu (1985), "Both the Taoism critique of Confucian ritualism and the Confucian critique of Taoist escapism are dialogical interplays reflecting a much deeper point of convergence. . . they not only co-exist but help each other to grow through mutual influence" (p. 9). Besides, a relational and holistic view of selfhood, in contrast to the Enlightenment rational self, is what underlies both Confucianism and Taoism. At the same time, however, their divergences cannot be ignored.

The ecological view of the self is much more nature-oriented for Taoism. While Confucians defines the nature of Way (Tao) as largely moral, Tao is the creative principle of self, reality, and the universe for Taoists. For Lao Zi, Confucian morality is the result of attending to branches, to the neglect of the root:

After Tao was lost, then came the "power";
After the "power" was lost, then came human benevolence;
After human benevolence was lost, then came righteousness;
After righteousness was lost, then came ritual.
Now ritual is the mere husk of loyalty and promise-keeping
And is indeed the first step towards brawling.⁶

Taoist self-cultivation focuses on a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature; suggesting a naturalism in which the self acts, thinks, and lives in tune with Tao, "the way of nature"; and implies a vision of the self beyond the split between the ego and the world. The suggestion that one should turn inward to attend to creative rhythms of nature and to achieve a higher state of human existence as an organic part of the cosmos through meditative practices should not be constrained by the Confucian morality. Zhuang Zi implies that one can achieve the state of true man only by forgetting moral codes and emptying the mind:

"I have made some progress," said Yen Hui [Yan Hui]. "What do you mean?" asked Confucius. "I forget human-heartedness (*jen*) [benevolence] and righteousness (*i*)," replied Yen Hui. "Very well, but that is not perfect," said Confucius.

Another day Yen Hui again saw Confucius and said: "I have made some progress." "What do you mean?" asked Confucius. "I forget ceremonials (*li*) [rituals] and music," replied Yen Hui. "Very well, but that is not perfect," said Confucius.

Another day Yen Hui again saw Confucius and said: "I have made some progress." "What do you mean?" asked Confucius. "I sit in forgetfulness," replied Yen Hui. Confucius changed countenance and said: "What do you mean by Sitting in Forgetfulness?"

"I have abandoned my body," said Yen Hui, "and discarded my knowledge, and so have become one with the Infinite (*ta t'ung*). This is what I mean by Sitting in Forgetfulness."

(Zhuang Zi, quoted in Fung Yu-Lan, 1931/1952, p. 241.)

In this passage, Zhuang Zi made up a conversation between Confucius and his favorite disciple with a Taoist twist. Zhuang Zi not only presents his resistance against the imposition of Confucian morality, but also shows unusual paths to self-realization. Taoist attitudes towards knowledge and the mind might be confusing at first glance. Both Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi oppose knowledge because they believe that the less knowledge one has of distinctions, things, and right and wrong, the nearer is one to the state of achieving the individual's unity with the universe. However, this state of non-

knowing is not the complete absence of knowledge, nor is it equal to the ignorance of a new-born baby, but reaches a higher existential level in which knowledge has been transcended and an intuitive way of experiencing and being has been cultivated to be in touch with the spirit of nature. So the return to nature is not a simple recovery of humanity in nature; it must be achieved by a conscious process of cultivation and spiritual creation. In a similar way, an empty mind does not mean complete nothingness, but implies a holistic way of becoming a microcosm of the cosmos. Such a devaluing of the importance of knowledge in self-cultivation directly opposes the Cartesian notion of the thinking subject.

Taoism also problematizes the role of language. At the very beginning of *Lao Zi (Dao De Jing)*, the nature of Tao is depicted as beyond the grasp of language: "The Tao that can be told of is not the constant Tao; The names that can be named are not constant names."⁷ Tao cannot be named. As soon as Tao is defined in language, it loses its meanings as an ultimate source. However, Tao is inherent in everything, invisible, indescribable, and inexhaustible. Language can convey only a part of experience, while naming cuts arbitrary distinctions among things but misses the individual characteristics of a particular thing. Such a critique of naming or labeling is echoed in poststructural concerns about the normalization of a fixed identity. But Taoist skepticism about language forms a contrast with poststructuralism's reliance on textual analysis. Can the Taoist self offer an alternative direction to the poststructuralist emphasis on the central role of the language games in decentering the subject?

Paradoxically, Taoist self-cultivation is achieved by forgetting the self: "The Perfect Man (*chih jen*) has no self; the Spiritual Man (*shen jen*) has no achievement; the Sage (*sheng*) has no name" (Zhuang Zi, quoted in Fung, 1952/1931, p. 243). Such a practice of forgetting the self aims at becoming one with the Tao through going beyond the individual's intellectual knowledge, bodily existence and its desires, and human moral wisdom. A trinity among individual, heaven, and earth brings absolute freedom to a person's life, overcoming the limitations, shallowness and falsity of the self away from the Tao. It is similar to Buddhist teaching to a certain degree, but as Brian Morris (1993) points out, "Taoism suggests neither complete detachment nor 'transcendence' from the empirical world, but rather living in harmony with the fundamental laws of nature" (p. 288).

In brief, the Chinese self shows a different landscape from the modern Western subject. Tu (1985) argues for the centrality of self-cultivation in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, in contrast to the Western projection of selflessness in Chinese traditions. For me, *subject-less* rather than *selfless* might be a more applicable term since Chinese traditions employ a different version of the self without being based upon a thinking subject. But such an assumption still applies the Western standard of the subject to the Chinese situation. The Chinese self exists in its own contexts. While it has its own limitations and shadows, it does ask Westerners to question their own perception of the self: Is the transcendental, autonomous and rational subject as formulated throughout the history of Western civilization really universal to humanity? How can we respond to a very different tradition such as Chinese culture in a mutually enhanced way? How can we approach the mutliplicity, diversity and differences in a

post-modern age? Furthermore, how can we understand alterity within the Western self? What about woman's experience of the self, for instance?

The Gendered Subject? Feminists Rethink the Self

If feminism presupposes that "women" designates an undesignatable field of differences, one that cannot be totalized or summarized by a descriptive identity category, then the very term becomes a site of permanent openness and resignifiability.

(Judith Butler, 1995, p. 50)

Patriarchy is not the result of modern philosophy and modern society. It can be traced back, for instance, as far as the Greek tradition in the West, which excludes women (and slaves) from the political order. Women are treated as inferior to men since women's nature is associated with the bodily, the irrational, and the sensual, which deviate from the norm of rationality and reason. Robin M. Schott (1988) traces pre-modern philosophical, social, and religious traditions to show how the split between cognition and eros, with the former dominating the latter, suppresses women to keep them from becoming fulfilling persons. However, such antecedents reach culmination in the modern age in which universal reason, autonomy, and transcendental unity are established as norms of the self, with the rise of science claiming objectivity and empirical control. In the Greek tradition, though reason is superior to body, the notion of the self is much more holistic, as the body still plays a key role in self-cultivation. But the exclusive role of scientific reason in modernity alienates women from the self as it repudiates the role of the body in constructing subjectivity. I will focus on the feminist critiques of the hegemony of the modern (male) self in excluding women in the following discussion.

The feminist critics of the male self in contemporary debates roughly belong to two different camps. While running the risk of reducing multiple discourses, I will sketch the central themes of each group. The first group intends to keep the Enlightenment ideal of rationality and autonomy to promote a feminist emancipatory subject. For this group of feminists, to challenge the exclusion of women in modernity should not subvert its normative criteria. Otherwise justice, freedom, and equality cannot be guaranteed. The second group, in contrast, attempts to question the essential project of modernity and the Enlightenment. For this group of feminists, holding onto universal norms of Enlightenment can only suppress woman's multiple, fluid, and heterogeneous self. These feminists are more concerned about how to play with differences than how to attach to the principle of equality. Such a heated debate, in a simplified way, can be termed as a modern/post-modern debate. Poststructural and post-modern feminist analyses also directly challenge the very notion of the subject as a useful concept. The debates between the two camps raise many critical questions, and I will follow the critiques of the rational, the autonomous, and the transcendental to show how Western feminists rethink the self.

Feminists often criticize the Cartesian notion of universal reason with its dualism between rationality and emotion, since it promotes and reproduces the masculinization of thought. While Genevieve Lloyd (1992) points out the dualism between mind and matter inherent in this notion, Susan Bordo (1986) identifies splits between the inner and the outer, between the subjective and the objective, between self and world, and between the subject and the object. Such dualism produces a masculine style of knowing and thinking which is detached from contexts, emotional life,

particularities, and the world. Reason in its detachment from emotion and body signifies the flight from the feminine as women are usually associated with the body. The standard of (male) rationality sets up an essential dualism between men and women: Men are the model of the self, but women do not have any self.

Similarly, Kantian rationalism is also criticized for its exclusion of women's notions of self, knowledge, and truth. Kant's explicit comments on the inferior status of women, especially, draw feminist attention. He writes, for example:

Nature entrusted to woman's womb its dearest pledge, the species, in the form of the foetus, by which the race is to propagate and perpetuate itself; and in so doing nature was fearful, so to speak, about the preservation of the species, and implanted this fear--fear in the face of *physical* harm and timidity in the face of physical dangers--in woman's nature. Through this weakness woman rightfully demands that man be her protector. (Immanuel Kant, 1974/1797, p. 169)

Such a direct link between nature/body and woman as a justification for men's power over women is obviously sexist. Kant is also very firm in his insistence that emotion is an antithetic to reason: "A mind that is subject to affects and passions is always *ill*, because both of them exclude the sovereignty of reason" (p. 119; emphasis in original). The sovereignty of reason, in its denial of emotions and affects, excludes women from the realm of the self.

As a resistance against Cartesian dualism and Kantian rationalism, some feminists such as Raia Prokhovnik (1999) try to conduct a critique of dichotomy and make links between reason and emotion to make "rational woman" possible. Others, particularly French feminists, on the other hand, intend to create embodied ways of thinking and writing which can be called "feminine." Cixous' *écriture féminine*, Kristeva's semiotic aspect of language, and Luce Irigaray's multiplicity of women's

sexuality, are all efforts to search for new ways of writing and language to embody women's *difference*. To speak of women's bodies and women's sexuality has great potential in breaking the silence accomplished by reducing women to the unspeakable inferior realm of eros or emotion. On the other hand, such a quest for inventing woman's language is sometimes criticized as "essentialist" since it could easily reinforce man's rational self by emphasizing the role of the body for woman. To acknowledge woman's differences from man without essentializing such differences and to play with them in such a way that new subjectivities can be created is necessary, I believe, for a feminist construction of the self. Without fixing meanings of body, the bodily nature of subjectivity can be utilized to destabilize the rational and the symbolic and infuse fluidity into the self.

To approach the dualism of mind and body, Kristeva assumes a peculiar position, not confined by the ideal of rationality, but, at the same time, not repudiating the symbolic order of the self. Her attention to the semiotic elements of language does not deny the importance of the symbolic, but intends to release the (suppressed) creative potential of the self. The heterogeneous realms of the semiotic and the symbolic make it necessary to form a self not only embodied, but also signified. Such a difficult negotiation between the feminine and the masculine reflects a somewhat different agenda from those feminists who focus only upon the "feminine."

The notion of autonomy is closely related to the notion of the rational self since it emphasizes disengagement and disembodiment, consequences of a notion of universal reason. As Sally Sedgwick (1997) points out, Kant's notion of moral autonomy and moral agency "is a function of acting from reason rather than from

feeling" (p. 78) which mirrors male rather than female identity. It also ignores the contextual particularity, sociality, and the historicity of morality.

A feminist ethics of care as a mode of thinking and living different from the Kantian autonomy has been inspired by Carol Gilligan's (1982) In a Different Voice. Her research suggests that "men and women may speak different languages that they assume are the same, using similar words to encode disparate experiences of self and social relationships" (p. 173). In such a situation, if we want to understand the different voice of women, we must approach women's languages in their own contexts. In her attempt to understand women's own experiences and their own articulations, Gilligan challenges a universal model of an autonomous self by pointing out how women's moral judgments are situated in a network of relationships and connections, tied to feelings of empathy and compassion, and attuned to the concreteness and particularity of the world.

The ethics of care and caring generates great debates among feminists. While some acknowledge Gilligan's work on autonomy and intersubjectivity as a positive development of the feminist projects, others point out its tendency to be incorporated into the patriarchal order. Still others, like Marilyn Friedman (1997), work through the tensions between autonomy and sociality, but do not want to abandon the ideal of independence while at the same time attempting to recognize the importance of social relations. Friedman believes that social relations are constitutive of autonomy. Questions remain: How can we as women reconstruct a relational self which does not confine us within a patriarchal order? How can we acknowledge the importance of the network of connections without sacrificing our quest for an independent self? Is it

possible for us to relate to others, community, and the world without a certain sense of autonomy? How can we approach the tension between autonomy and relationships?

Although emphasizing the importance of the pre-Oedipal relationship between mother and child, Kristeva believes it is equally important that the child learn how to separate from the mother in order to become mature and independent. Furthermore, relationship and independence are closely related to each other: "My knowledge that I can leave is what enables us to be together" (p. 75) and *vice versa*. In Tales of Love, Kristeva (1987) describes how love, in the relationship of the I *with* the Other, leads to renewal and rebirth of the self. Interestingly, she approaches the pre-Oedipal father (father of individual prehistory) as the father of love who is both paternal and maternal, both masculine and feminine, which implies the loss of a loving relationship in paternity in modern society.

The sovereignty of reason and autonomy in the modern (male) self is intensified by the flight to the transcendental. The universality of the self is obvious in Descartes' *Cogito*: "I am, then in the strict sense only a thing that thinks; that is, I am a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason. . . . A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions" (Descartes, 1984/1641, pp. 18-19). I believe the "I" in Descartes' discourse refers to general or universal humanity rather than to a unique individual. Such universality rather than particularity reaches the level of the transcendental in the Kantian conception of the self. Kant divides the self into the phenomenal (empirical) self that can be known and the noumenal self that is free and unknowable. According to Sedgwick (1997), such a division keeps its transcendental and metaphysical sense of a

unitary subject by subordinating the empirical self to the noumenal self, rather than providing any possibility of letting the empirical self multiply.

Feminist critics of the transcendental self point out how a universal and abstract idea of the subject is divorced from the concreteness of the self situated socially, culturally, and auto/biographically. One critic shows how a continuous movement of otherness within the self makes impossible a unitary self. This consideration of otherness leads in different directions. Several feminists attempt to expand universalist claims of autonomy and responsibilities while other feminists reject any universal norm and valorize the fluidity and multiplicity of the self. Since women's search for the self is historically denied under patriarchal control (Lerner, 1993), abandoning an essentialistic view of femininity can be tricky: Can we be engaged in feminist projects without locating a unitary female subject? How can we disrupt the myth of the transcendental subject without abandoning the political work of women's identity rebuilding? Seyla Benhabib (1992) argues for a post-Enlightenment universalism to situate the self in interactive dialogue that is more inclusive of differences and the concrete "other." However, such efforts to expand universalism, rather than to challenge it, are always in danger of producing new exclusions. As Sawicki (1991) and Butler (1990) suggest, the search for a unitary female self, whatever new form it takes, usually fails to consider differences across class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientations.

The rise of black feminism, lesbian feminism and third-world feminism has greatly challenged the traditional liberal feminist ideal. The difficulties women from minority backgrounds such as black women, lesbians, working-class women, and those

women whose English is not their native language have met within mainstream feminism have already shown the impossibility of re-building a unified self without exclusion and repression. So we have bell hook's (1982) cry "Ain't I a woman," Carolyn Steedman's (1986)'s drawing of a working class girl's landscape, Adrienne Rich's (1980) depiction of lesbian existence and the lesbian continuum against compulsory heterosexuality, and Chandra Mohanty's (1991) refusal to be subjected to the gaze of "Western eyes."

Influenced by post-modernism and psychoanalysis, many feminists begin to approach the self through concepts of multiplicity, diversity, and fluidity as challenges to the universal and the transcendental. In contrast to the transcendental and unitary subject, Kristeva (1996) not only formulates the subject-in-process which "gives us a vision of the human venture as a venture of innovation, of creation, of opening, of renewal" (p. 26), but she also points out the heterogeneity of the self: the heterogeneity between unconscious experience and social structure, and the heterogeneity between the semiotic and the symbolic, for instance. She believes that we all have strangers within us and that the foreignness of being a woman makes the feminine self always in the process of creation through multiplicity. A Kristevian dynamic of the self dissolves the transcendental unity of the modern subject into a fluid process constantly open to diversity and otherness.

Such an emphasis on the differences within and the multiplicity of the self leads to the questioning of the very notion of the subject, echoing Foucaultian concerns about exclusions and suppressions produced by the very practices of categorization and classification. Jana Sawicki (1990), Butler (1992, 1995) and Bordo (1993) all use

Foucaultian analysis in critical ways to question the process of producing the subject. They approach the body not as given but as socially and culturally constructed; they then they take the fluidity and plurality of the female body as disrupting the binary boundaries of inside/outside, self/other, active/passive, and subject/object. In such embodiment, being a woman does not share a stable and fixed meaning, but becomes the site for multiple and, more often than not, contradictory modes of subjectivity.

While Sawicki (1991) suggests that we need to live with the paradox between Foucaultian self-displacement and women's need for identity building, Butler (1990, 1995) goes further to question the necessity of regarding women as the subject of feminism, since it tends to assume a normative prerequisite of "we" before carrying out feminist politics. But the notion of setting up a norm for the unity of the feminist "we" in advance is problematic, and the grounds for producing the subject of women is contingent rather than pre-given. In order to create new possibilities of what it means to be a woman, and to create new configurations, resignification, and unanticipated meanings of being a woman, Butler believes, it is necessary to resist the category of woman attached to a fixed referent.

Kristeva (1996) claims that woman can never be defined and that woman is beyond representation: "The position of the feminine in discourse is a very difficult position to specify. As soon as one specifies it, one loses it, seeing that, perhaps, the feminine is precisely what escapes nomination and representation" (p. 32). On the one hand, Kristeva believes that it is still meaningful to say "we are women" for the sake of a political agenda. On a deeper level, however, "a woman can never *be*, for woman is precisely that which shuns *being*" (p. 98). In so saying, Kristeva is more attentive to

the subversive aspect of being a woman who remains outside the realm of law and whose re/creation cannot be confined within current codes of representation. A woman who is feminine in this way behaves in a critical manner to transform the realm of representation into a signifying process open to the semiotic which is not reducible to language. (A man can perform similar functions by being "feminine" in this sense.) A woman who cannot be defined, thus, retains her status as a stranger who does not follow the law and rules and attempts to insert her alienness into the symbolic to pave new paths for subjectivity.

The suggestion that we cannot define in advance the subject of woman and the denial of a unified concept of woman and woman's experience are very disturbing to many feminists, especially to those who still hold liberatory ideals for feminist projects. How can women organize for women's liberation if there is no essential understanding of what it means to be a woman? How can female emancipation be possible without regulative principles of agency, autonomy, and selfhood (Benhabib, 1995)? In both Butler's philosophy of the subject and Kristeva's psychoanalysis of the subject, resistance against defining a woman's essence derives from their commitments to approaching woman as critic who is subversive of patriarchal codes in the most possible creative ways. The subject is always in movement. Butler (1995) addresses the issue by pointing out the subject's situatedness in social, historical, and cultural conditions which are themselves shifting and changing: "The constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency" (p. 46). Kristeva approaches the issue by suggesting that the close relationship between the semiotic and the maternal

opens possibilities for creating new portraits of the self. Because the semiotic is beyond representation, woman is beyond classification.

Feminist critiques of the (male) subject are in a dynamic process of contestation and debates. I wish not to outline such heated debates here, only to set a context for my further discussion. Without any consensus, feminist critics show the complexity of an ongoing process of multiple signification and contingent differentiation underlying the problematic aspects of woman's subject. The divided camps of feminist critics, actually any form of critique, ask us to rethink our critical relations with traditions. Is it possible to have a complete break with our past and our traditions while we are actually entrenched in these traditions one way or another? And is it necessary to do so? On the other hand, why should we frame our new theoretical concerns within traditions that undermine the creation of new languages to re-address the issues previously ignored or suppressed? How can we play with the simultaneous givenness and fluidity of language?

Traveling through the complexity and ambiguity of spaces in which the self of both West and East, both man and woman, without claiming an essence of each identity, identities which intersect, co-exist, and contradict with each other, I attempt to journey through Foucault back to Confucius and further into Kristeva. To draw a multilayered landscape of "the self after post-modernity" (Schrage, 1997) in a style of traditional Chinese painting--different visual angles must be shown *simultaneously* on the paper to show nature in a more lifelike way--I invite you to come into the picture following your own unique path to start the tour of the human self/selves.

Notes

1. The Analects, 8.7.
2. Ibid., 6.30.
3. Ibid., 15.24.
4. Ibid., 15.21.
5. Ibid., 7.16.
6. In Lao Zi.
7. Ibid., Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 3: THE CARE OF THE SELF, FREEDOM AND SELF-CREATION: FOUCAULT'S CHALLENGE

My mother told me that I was afraid of strangers as a young child. When I was with my parents in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution as a little child, several people were looking for my home and asked me for the direction. Busy with playing with clay, I refused to answer their question. When I was back home, the guests exclaimed: "There she is! She did not even look at us when we asked her the direction!" It later became a joke in my family. After I left my hometown, though, I moved from one city to another, and journeyed to another country, constantly among strangers. Acknowledging that behind the danger of the stranger lurks new potential for life, no longer a timid child, I have learned and am still learning how to reach for something *other* and *different* to understand both self and other anew, living with strangers. A critical distance from both self and other becomes important to expanding one's horizons.

Michel Foucault is a stranger to me, especially with his "legendary laugh and outward gaiety of manner" under James Miller's (1993, p. 328) depiction, and with his piercing gaze. Yet when I first came across his writings on the formation of the subject, I was immediately captivated by his call for the care of the self. Is it possible that what is the most strange can be What is hidden deeply inside of the self waiting for a chance to come out?

A new picture of the self that Foucault promised to draw but could not because of his death becomes a challenge. It provides a fresh new direction for me as I wander around the labyrinth of the poststructural critique of the subject. On the other hand, though, with his emphasis upon freedom and individual creativity, Foucault is a very

Western man to me, although he launched powerful attacks upon Western traditions and modern philosophy. Although I am drawn to Foucault's new understanding of the subject, a critical distance I attempt to maintain as a Chinese woman keeps whispering, "You cannot afford to get too close! You cannot lose yourself in the stranger!" With this distance, I am going to explore what possibilities Foucault's later works on the human subject can offer, and what limitations need to be considered if we as women theorists utilize his ideas. Regarding my cross-cultural analysis of Foucault's ideas I will leave to the next chapter when I discuss Confucianism. In this chapter, I will attempt first to elaborate on Foucaultian ethics and aesthetics of self-care, with questions, and then move to a gendered critique of the Foucaultian subject.

The Problematic of Identity and the Care of the Self

As David Smith (1996) points out, contemporary debates in the West, to a great degree, have been centered on the problematic of identity. He locates the crisis of identity in "a profound *desire* for identity" (p. 7) in the West and calls for "a healthy abandonment of the concepts of Self and Other" (p. 9), according to Buddhist and Zen teachings. Coming from Chinese culture, I appreciate the Eastern wisdom about the co-emergence of self, other, and the universe, but I have some doubts about the abandonment of an independent boundary between self and other. It is true that terms such as "identity" and "subject" are not often used in traditional Chinese culture, especially in the Western transcendental sense of identifying an essence of the subject. However, I would argue, challenging the dualism between subject and object must be coupled with the effort to keep a certain distance between the two, so that in-depth understanding of both the self and the world is possible. The boundary between

self and other is shifting and permeating, but the distance between the two cannot be abandoned because such an abandonment more often than not does not lead to the enlightenment of the mind, as Buddhist monks can reach, but results in the loss of the self in others. As a Chinese woman in the United States, I often feel the difficulty of engaging in a dynamic interaction between self and other with the input of both culture and gender. When self and other do not have mutual and equal status, and when the boundary between is set, the transformative potential of a shifting self is highly limited. When the circulation of power is not seriously considered, the notion of the self in movement and in flux cannot be elaborated without the danger of non-privileged people losing their own sense of the self. However, to acknowledge social inequality does not necessarily lead to a fixed notion of a cultural or a gendered self because a stable and essentialized self suppresses differences inside and outside to make the self static. The dynamic of self and other is set into motion by the necessity of reaching out for the other and reaching inside for otherness, so that new possibilities of the self can be explored.

My own experience of losing and reconstructing identity opens me to the aporia of self and other, situated in the fluidity of human life. To claim one's self in the process of becoming and emerging is a difficult yet necessary task in a lifetime project of self-creation. The co-emergence of self and other, and subject and object in Chinese culture cannot be romanticized and has its own shadow, which I will discuss in chapter 4. To take the complicated interplay between power and subjectivity into consideration, I believe the problematic of identity does not necessarily lead to the collapse of identity or the disappearance of the boundary between self and other. Rather, the issue is to

understand how identity is constructed culturally and historically to create spaces for new forms of subjectivity, as Michel Foucault has attempted to do.

My personal experiences through the danger of self-dissolution and the subsequent painful process of rising from the darkest valley to find my own path make me continually ask the question, "How can one claim the self while at the same time forming a constructive relationship with others?" Interestingly, this process coincided with reading Foucault's works, especially his later writings on the subject, and not surprisingly, my reading of Foucault was different in various time periods. However, I have been intrigued by how the problematic of identity leads Foucault to re-think and re-construct the notion of the subject. Foucault's regeneration of self-care privileges the relationship between self and oneself, which will be questioned in the next chapter.

However, this self-self relationship has been one of my pre-occupations as I continually struggle with my own sense of the self. To start with the self is an important step to understanding both self and other and to forming a creative relationship.

Foucault (1978, 1997) approaches the problematic of identity by understanding historically, socially, and critically how the subject is constituted and constitutes itself in and through discourse and power relations. His (1978) fluid notion of power relations and discursive understanding of discourse situates the subject in the network of power-knowledge, while the subject is not totally independent of or completely determined by the web. This complicated set of interrelationships among and between power, knowledge, and subjectivity makes it possible for Foucault to claim "an ontology of ourselves" which is not based upon a transcendental notion of the self but is "at one and the same time [an] historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an

experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (Foucault, 1997, p. 319). Thus Foucault's return to the question of the subject is not a simple return, for he transforms it under a new light with the acknowledgement of both a constructed nature and the creative possibility of the self.

More often than not, Foucault's later works on the self are criticized as inconsistent with his early works on cultural, historical, and political analysis of how social institutions regulate subjects and produce exclusions. Foucault actually has already answered this criticism in one of his interviews. In his life-long devotion to understanding "a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves" (1997, p. 224), he identifies four major types of these technologies and pays particular attention to technologies of power and technologies of self. In constant interaction instead of functioning separately, both are modes for modifying individuals. For me, the shift from social construction of the subject to the transgressive capacity of the self seems like a necessary step instead of a decisive break. Since the subject is produced and regulated by institutions and constitutes institutions, to release the creative power of the self against institutional constraints becomes imperative. One must find ways of going beyond limitations to become oneself. It is like two sides of one coin.

Foucault's critical formulation of a new ontology of the self dissolves the arguments of his critics who ironically, in conflicting directions, regard his discourse either as too hopeless to register human agency (Fraser, 1994) or too autonomous, falling back to the philosophy of the transcendental subject (Garrison, 1998). This new relation with the self is critical and reflective so that historical, social, and cultural

limitations upon the self can be realized and at the same time transcended to create new forms of subjectivity. For Foucault, "playing with structure--transforming and transfiguring its limits" instead of "playing inside the structure" (Quoted in Miller, 1993, p. 353) is the path one needs to take. This notion of playing *with* indicates Foucault's devotion to a form of self-creation situated at the edge of social and historical limitations with the potential to go beyond.

After studying the games of truth and their interaction with power relations, Foucault "felt obliged to study the games of truth in the relationship of self with self and the forming of oneself as a subject" (1985, p. 6). In his later works, Foucault (1997) shifts his attention to the relationship of oneself to oneself, i.e., how one constitutes oneself as the subject of one's thinking, feeling, and living:

Technologies of the self, [which] permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (p. 225)

To explore the technologies of the self, in The Use of Pleasure (1985), Foucault investigates how individuals formed themselves as subjects of desire in antiquity, through dietetics, marriage and erotic relationships with boys. In The Care of the Self (1986), Foucault turns to the Greco-Roman notion of the care of the self, which is "one of the main principles of cities, one of the main rules for social and personal conduct and for the art of life" (1997, p. 226), to trace the evolution of self-cultivation. His historical and critical studies of the desiring subject and the cultivation of the self often form a contrast with Christianity and its practices. While on the one hand he points out a certain continuity between Greco-Roman principles and Christian notions, such as the

prevalence of self-mastery in both, he painstakingly analyzes how the two show different attitudes towards the self. Such a genealogical analysis aims to "learn to what extent the effort to think one's own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently" (Foucault, 1985, p. 9). Again, the focus is to understand one's historicity in order to go beyond this historicity to become different.

According to Foucault (1986), the care of the self in the Greco-Roman tradition, is embedded in the idea that one ought to attend and constantly return to oneself, care for oneself so that one's soul can be perfected by reason. The care of the self, *epimeleia heautou*, is a concept starting from about the third century B.C. and continuing until the second or third century A.D. This tradition has several principles. It is a rational mastery of the self over oneself which is regarded as an object to be reflected upon and transformed. It is valuable for everyone but particularly necessary for people who need to rule others, whether in family or in society. It is an activity throughout one's life. It is a soul-oriented activity without exclusion of the body. It is a practice of freedom.

In the tradition of the care of the self, one is called upon to take oneself as an object of contemplation and knowledge, and to follow the principles of rational conduct in correcting one's faults and perfecting one's souls. Seneca regarded Roman Stoic Sextius' questions as an example of reflection upon his soul before retiring for the night: "What bad habit have you cured today? What fault have you resisted? In what respect are you better?" (Foucault, 1986, p. 61) Here self-mastery in accord with reason is the key. One regulates one's food, regimen, pleasure, and relations with others, such as in marriage and with boys, so that moderation can replace excess for the perfection of the soul. Meditations, readings, notes, recollections, letters—all these exercises of the self

serve this purpose of living a mode of life that requires one "to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself" (Foucault, 1985, p. 28). The importance of rationality is evident here. Interestingly, Foucault does not elaborate how this rational mode of living is transformed into his own vision of the self, which is much more embodied. The intricate link between rationality and masculinity is also left unquestioned. What would a gendered analysis of this rational self-mastery tell us? I will return to this question later.

The care of the self in principle is a valuable style of life available to everyone. Actually "everyone" refers only to every man, and further only to every free man. In other words, it is an exercise for those people who are already in power and required to rule others. In The Use of Pleasure, Foucault points out that the moral reflection upon an appropriate use of pleasure is a male ethic which excludes women, who are little more than objects. Such an elaboration of masculine conduct invites man to be actively engaged in forming himself as a subject. Such a style of life, although privileged philosophically and existentially is not a universal norm for every free man to follow. It depends upon the personal choice of how to live one's life. To emphasize the de-normalizing principle of the Greco-Roman self-care, Foucault does not directly comment on the elitist tendency in this ethic. The claim of personal choice cannot deal with the fact that only privileged people can have a choice. How can the Greco-Roman self-care be regenerated in such a way that new possibilities to non-privileged people can be opened up?

The care of the self, "more than an exercise done at regular intervals . . . is a constant attitude that one must take toward oneself" (Foucault, 1986, p. 63), which

depicts a life-long project of creating an ethically and aesthetically pleasing life. It is never too early or too late to start caring for the soul and such an exercise is a permanent movement, encouraging one to be engaged in a continuous process of self-transformation.

In the tradition of the care of the self, there is a certain ambivalent element concerning the role of the body. On the one hand, self-cultivation aims at caring for one's soul and imbuing it with reason, and as a result, the concern with the body seems not very important. On the other hand, an intense attention to the body and the circulation between the body and the soul makes the care of the self closely related to that of the body. It is believed that the disturbances, excesses, and ills of the body can communicate into the soul to cause its failings while the bad habits of the soul can result in bodily trouble. Because of such interplay, it becomes necessary to pay attention to food, health, regimens, and any disturbances of the body in the practices of the self. While the body is still under the reasonable regulation of the soul, there is no modern duality here. In Foucault's own vision, the body can become the site for creating new subjectivities. How is the Greco-Roman tradition of "body under regulation of the soul" transformed into a new ethics of body as the site for self-creation? Foucault seems not interested in making any explicit links, while the jump from the Greco-Roman self-care to Foucault's body politics is unclear. The problematic of the body is important for a gendered analysis of identity politics. Without grappling with this issue, how can a contemporary version of self-care be possible?

The care of the self is a practice of freedom. In The Use of Pleasure Foucault discusses a notion of freedom in the context of the Greco-Roman culture. This notion

does not aim at achieving autonomy, independence of a free will, or liberation from oppression. It is characterized as the exercise of self-mastery and the governing of pleasures and desires by an active individual who practices moderation, rationality, and wisdom to achieve a state of beauty in his existence. Here again reason (*logos*), self-control, the masculine structure of active posture versus passivity, and rational principles of subduing desires and regulating behavior are dominant. On the other hand, it is a freedom first exercised over oneself, which refuses the enslavement of the self by oneself or others or institutions and at the same time avoids abuse of power over others. Foucault, while recognizing its hierarchical nature, believes the care of the self as a practice of freedom can become a way of limiting, regulating and controlling the domination of power because "it is the power over oneself that thus regulates one's power over others" (p. 288). As a practice of freedom, the care of the self also emphasizes one's independence from the external world to focus on the cultivation of the soul. Such a turning away from the external and a retreat into oneself is a personal choice of abstinence and moderation to exercise a form of active freedom.

What puzzles me, as I will discuss more in detail later, is that Foucault's turning to the Greco-Roman ethics lacks the rigor of the critical attitudes that the very ethic of self-care in the context of Enlightenment "permanent critique" demands (Foucault, 1997). Perhaps his early death made it impossible to articulate his own vision of the self beyond the Greco-Roman traditions. Still, important issues about body, reason, gender, and subject/object dichotomy remain ambiguous in Foucault's own writings in terms of how to create a new subjectivity that goes beyond the modern ideal of the subject.

Ambiguous as it is, Foucault presents a challenge to us to re-think the notion of freedom and self-creation.

Foucault traces the evolution of self-cultivation from Greek, Roman, and Christian thought into the modern notion of the subject imbued with scientific truth. From the Greek into the Roman imperial period, there is already an increasing anxiety over pleasure and "a certain strengthening of austerity themes" (Foucault, 1986, p. 235). Such precautions seem to share certain similarities with the preoccupations of later moral systems. However, Foucault painstakingly analyzes how the Greco-Roman notion of self-cultivation is different from the Christian confessional practice of self-salvation and the modern science of the subject. Through this historical analysis, Foucault attempts to generate a new picture of the human self who takes a critical, transgressive and creative attitude towards itself without resort to the support of a normative universal truth, whether it is a religious obligation or a scientific claim.

Through genealogical analysis, Foucault (1986, 1997) shows how the Greco-Roman notion of the care of the self as a positive precept was converted into the negative posture of renouncing one's self to obey God's will in early Christianity.¹ In the process, the notion of "Know Thyself," initially as a consequence and a part of "Take care of the self," has become dominant so that the question of truth occupies a central position in the formation of the subject. Furthermore, the care of the self is more of a management and administrative practice of self-improvement while Christian self-examination is more of a juridical system of imposing normalizing practice upon everyone. As a result, the purpose of self-mastery in the former is self-transformation, while in the latter it is for renouncing sin and evil hidden in the heart to purify one's

soul. The turn from a holistic notion of the self (still with rationality privileged) to a Christian devotion to absolute truth realized by the self is an inward turn towards a more normalized self.

In the Christian confessional practice of self-examination, one must search for and disclose all sins in one's heart and renounce oneself in order to achieve purification of the soul for salvation. Thoughts and desires rather than behaviors are the primary focus of self-examination to find faults, recognize temptations, and discover a truth hidden deep within oneself. Foucault particularly analyzes two techniques of the self in early Christianity: *exomologesis*, public recognition of faith which "rubs out the sin and yet reveals the sinner" (p. 244), and *exagoreusis*, verbalization of all one's thoughts in the renunciation of one's own self. As a result, "Know yourself" as a way of deciphering and discovering the truth about oneself becomes crucial. Self-knowledge also occupies a considerable place in the Greco-Roman notion of the care of the self, but it is brought into action by first attending to the self. The principle of knowing oneself is subordinated to the principle of the care of the self. Furthermore, the Greco-Roman practice of self-examination focuses more on action and is not for the renunciation of the self. Discussing Stoic Seneca's practices of self-examination, Foucault (1986) writes:

The purpose of the examination is not...to discover one's own guilt, down to its most trifling form and its most tenuous roots. If "one conceals nothing from oneself," if one "omits nothing," it is in order to commit to memory, so as to have them present in one's mind, legitimate ends, but also rules of conduct that enable one to achieve these ends through the choice of appropriate means. The fault is not reactivated by the examination in order to determine a culpability or stimulate a feeling of remorse, but in order to strengthen, on the basis of the recapitulated and reconsidered verification of a failure, the rational equipment that ensures a wise behavior. (p. 62)

The important differences between the Greco-Roman and Christian self-examinations are made clear here.

Without the purpose of discovering a secret truth, the care of the self aims at adjusting and regulating acts to follow the rules for what ought to be done through recollecting what has been done, remembering rules of rational conduct, and reevaluating what should have been done. Its purpose is to get rid of bad habits, correct faults, and perfect one's life. Not as a universal demand for complete obedience to God, the care of the self emphasizes self-reliance and personal choice. The work one exercises on oneself is not imposed by civil laws or religious obligations, but is a choice one makes about one's own existence. By contrast, Christian confession is a practice of normalization achieved by self-sacrifice² and self-punishment to expel the inner shadow, disclose the self, and purify one's soul. It imposes a regime upon everyone to follow only one path for self-salvation. Foucault believes this sense of self-renunciation is an altered way of constituting oneself as the subject, different from the Greco-Roman principle of self-mastery in rational moderation.

While Foucault does not think that the Greeks provide a model alternative to a modern ethics based upon scientific knowledge and truth about the self (1997, p. 256), he attempts to rejuvenate the care of the self as an aesthetic and ethical way of living one's life as a work of art. Through tracing historical construction and alteration of the technologies of the self, Foucault shows that the formation of the subject is the result of social and cultural circumstances: practices of the self are not individual inventions but what one finds in his culture, his society, and his groups. While the essentialist and universal modern view of the subject based upon scientific knowledge is rejected, the

relation one has to oneself is transformed into a creative activity. "From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art" (1997, p. 262).

This ethics and aesthetics of self-creation is a strategy Foucault employs to deal with the problematic of identity in a constructive yet non-essentializing way. As a tactical move, to characterize the Greco-Roman self-care and the Christian self-salvation as two practices leading to different directions of identity, as problematic as it is (see note 1 and the next section), does produce temporary configurations that characterize the individual. Such a fluid construction of the individual is mobilized as a plurality of forces interact, struggle, and compromise. The care of the self flows into this complex process to work on the limits, "grasp the points where change is possible and desirable" (1997, p. 316), and further guide the directions of self-transformation. As a practice of freedom, the care of the self, according to Foucault, encourages one to pass beyond the limits, to transform the horizon of what one sees and how one acts, and to get free of oneself in order to invent new styles of subjectivity.

To address the issue of identity, Foucault says, "if we are asked to relate to the question of identity, it must be an identity to our unique selves. . . . But the relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather, they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation" (1997, p. 166). The purpose of the care of the self is not to remain the same but to free differences. Foucault does not intend to exclude identity, but to reject it as a universal rule attached to a hidden truth or essence to uncover. Identity as a useful concept must be understood as a game or procedure, to be in relationships which are fluid and

shifting. Echoing Smith's (1996) suspicion about the very term "identity," Foucault nevertheless elaborates a double-faced subject which constantly constitutes itself beyond its constituted self, a subject with active freedom to craft its own existence. The effort to abandon the concept of Self and Other is displaced into a new ontology of self which is embedded within its relationship with other. To address the problematic of identity, Foucault refuses to provide any a priori theory of the subject, but through destabilizing identity, he opens a space for transforming the subject through a continuous process of formation and creation. Engaging in a critical project of freedom, feminists may ask, can the Greco-Roman male-dominated ethics of self-care be useful to feminist concerns about identity and politics? I will return to this issue later.

Possibilities of Self-Creation: Politics through Aesthetics and Ethics

I shall...characterize the philosophical ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as a historical-practical test of the limits we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings. (Foucault, 1997, p. 316)

There are several criticisms (Schrag, 1997; Wolins, 1986) of Foucault's regeneration of the Greco-Roman notion of the care of the self; he is accused to blur the boundary among politics, aesthetics and ethics. In other words, how can politics exist in a work of art and how can the relational principles of the self be embedded in aesthetics? As a person coming from Chinese culture, one which does not draw any clear distinctions among the three, it is actually not a problematic to me. What I am more concerned with is how to make self-creation possible through critical aesthetics and relational ethics and how to extend this possibility to those who are not privileged, an issue Foucault does not successfully address. Resisting the universalizing and

normalizing tendency of inventing discourses, Foucault attends to deviant postures of art to convey a sense of "limit attitude," a sense of opening human possibilities without resort to any essential foundation. Such a strategy, though, tends to romanticize aesthetics as necessarily having the potential of going beyond social constraints, while art is hardly free from historical, cultural, and institutional influences. For instance, the Chinese aesthetics of harmony in differences is distinctively different from the Western aesthetics of norm-disrupting ethos due to historical and cultural differences in philosophy, ways of life, and notions of the self. Considering these limitations--does any discourse have no limitations? I attempt to focus on, in this section, what possibilities Foucault tries to open up through the ethics and aesthetics of self-care for identity politics.

The care of the self in the ethics and aesthetics of existence requires one to form a political relationship first with oneself. This act is political in the sense that "being free means not being a slave to oneself and one's appetites, which means that with respect to oneself one establishes a certain relationship of domination, of mastery" (1997, p. 286-87). The power one exercises over oneself is closely related to the power one exercises over others, so that the relationship with others is always present. In the Greco-Roman tradition, only when one can govern oneself can one govern others, and to be master of oneself implies that one is able to form a proper relationship with others. However, Foucault firmly claims that "I do not think we can say that the Greek who cares for himself must first care for others. . . . Care for others should not be put before the care of oneself. The care of the self is ethically prior in that the relationship with oneself is ontologically prior" (p. 287). For Foucault, when the care of others

becomes a starting point in an ethical relationship between self and other, the care of the self loses a large part of its autonomy. Foucault suggests that the appropriate exercise of the self upon the self is intended to transform and renew oneself all the time in relationships with others, but without self-sacrifice and self-renunciation for others or authorities. For me, the priority of self-care over the care of the other, as masculine as it is, becomes an important moment in establishing my identity as a woman--as important as the moment of being able to relate to others. I had long believed in and practiced the care for others, forgetting how necessary it is for a giving out of self to be coupled with affirming both self and other. Without self-affirmation, the care for others cannot reach the depths of my own heart to transform myself, and when giving out is not coupled with returning within, the flow of energy and life between self and other is blocked. As I will argue later on, this self-care needs to be simultaneously accompanied by relationships with others so the priority of self-care over concerns for others is dissolved to a certain degree. Still, I believe, to re-appropriate this ethics of self-care based upon a gendered analysis, women's concerns about identity politics can be addressed.

Foucault actually points out that care of the self implies care for others since a complex and a critical relationship with self cannot be achieved without relationships with others. The care of the self is "an intensification of social relations" (1986, p. 53) when, in the practice of self-care, one seeks spiritual guidance from another person and this exchange is transformed into a shared experience so that reciprocal friendships and obligations are established. One who can take care of oneself is able to conduct oneself properly in relation to others and for others. When power is abused and exercised for

the purpose of dominating others, it is precisely because one does not take care of the self and becomes the slave of one's desires.

The relationship between care of the self and care for others is implicated in the call for "care[ing] about the care of others" for themselves (Foucault, 1997, p. 287), especially for philosophers. There is certain element of awakening inherent in the role of the philosopher who calls upon people to wake up from the given, the taken-for-granted, and the established in an effort to think the unthought and experience the limits of life. Such an ethics and aesthetics of self-creation implies the affirmation of others' engagement with their own self-creation: "How one can make allowance for the other's freedom in the mastery that one exercises over oneself?" (Foucault, 1985, p. 252) Is not this a powerful metaphor for teachers to re-think their own role as educators who are engaged in a philosophical critique to care about the care of students?

For Foucault, a philosophical mode of critique embedded in the aesthetics of existence is closely related to the interrogation of a universal notion of individuality in the contemporary age. No matter whether this notion is situated in religious demands of self-discovery and self-salvation, or in scientific explorations about the truth of the self, or in the "cult of the self," its essence is to uncover and fulfill. The normalizing technology of modern power behind the abstraction of individualization "categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him" (Foucault, 1982a, p. 212). To create new forms of subjectivity and to make individual originality possible, we must refuse such a principle of individuality imposed externally. In this sense, perhaps Foucault's ethics and aesthetics of the self is

also a politics of the self against submission to subjectivity. It is a politics of self-creation to think, perceive, and live other than we do, to be engaged in the endless task of reinventing oneself. When universal forms of identity are contested and the contingency and historicity of self-formation are affirmed, identity is fluid, expanding itself into new directions, and is freed to flow beyond the limits of subjectivity.

Derrida calls upon a sense of responsibility without universal foundation (Derrida, 1995; Egea-Kunehe, 1995; Doll, 2001a) while Rorty (1999) elaborates on ethics without normalizing principles. Such an emphasis on contextualization rather than universality is echoed in Foucault's refusal to found the ethics of the self upon any essential basis. Instead he appropriates the critical function of aesthetics to encourage the individual to conduct oneself according to one's own vision of life. Richard Bernstein (1991), acknowledging Foucault's ethical-political project of moving beyond limits, still asks the question about *which* possibility and *why* it is desirable. I believe this is a paradox of human life, in terms of dealing with the undecidability of affirming change without affirmative norms, that we must encounter if we are willing to push ourselves constantly at the point of starting over to expand human horizons. Our responsible choice is to live with this paradox in an effort to build bridges to new worlds while connecting to our own world. Neither flying into the utopia of one path nor being lost in our own world can we shoulder the burden of the present to open new possibilities. Foucault articulates this vision through "limit attitude."

In formulating a modern ethic of the self, Foucault is explicit that an important feature of creating oneself as a work of art is embedded within a limit attitude. In "What is Enlightenment?" taking up Kant's critical attitude of modernity and

Baudelaire's experimental attitude towards the self, Foucault attempts to depict the modern ethics of the self as an aesthetic invention. This aesthetics is to make "his body, his behavior, his feelings and passions, his very existence, a work of art" (1997, p. 312), thus going beyond the normalization of individuality. For Foucault, Christian universal codes, modern state violence, and normalizing individualization in the truths of law or science, all constrain individuals to externally imposed codification. Therefore, he (1982a) argues:

Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political "double bind," which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures. (p. 216)

In contrast to the normalizing and homogenizing tendencies of modern society behind the screen of individualization, ancient Greek ethics without normalizing pressures and claims of universal truth, can provide--Foucault believes--insights for us to rethink modern ethics. In his discussion of the Enlightenment, Foucault attempts to depict a critical attitude toward modernity like the Greek notion of "ethos." And this attitude "is tied to an indispensable asceticism" (1997, p. 311) which also comes from the Greco-Roman tradition. In The Use of Pleasure, (Foucault, 1985) depicts the ancient form of morality in its stylized self-mastery, which provides important implications for the formation of a modern ethics as an attitude and a quest:

[I]n this form of morality, the individual did not make himself into an ethical subject by universalizing the principles that informed his action; on the contrary, he did so by means of an attitude and a quest that individualized his action, modulated it, and perhaps even gave him a special brilliance by virtue of the rational and deliberate structure his action manifested. (p. 62)

An attitude of modernity under Foucault's elaboration not only forms a critical relationship to the present, to "imagine it otherwise than it is, and to transform it" (1997, p. 311), but also forms a mode of relationship which "take[s] oneself as object of a complex and difficult elaboration" (p. 311) to invent oneself. Such a play with reality of both self and world through the tension of both accepting it and transgressing it is a practice of freedom; a freedom that cannot be defined by any universal rules of ethics, morality, religion, or science. "Modern man," Foucault says, "is not the man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself" (p. 312) as a work of art. The historical and critical attitude of "crossing-over" (p. 315) as both an investigation of our historicity in constituting ourselves and an exploration of the possibility for us to constitute ourselves beyond our historicity, implies a critique of any universal structure in which the truth of the self can be uncovered. Based upon a non-essentialized notion of the self, Foucault's politics of the self is embedded within a transgressive potential of self-creation in forming new ways of thinking, living, and experiencing.

While some scholars accuse Foucault of reducing ethics to amoral aesthetics (O'Farrell, 1989; Wolin, 1986), I would argue that it is his deep distrust for an essentialized notion of the self in metaphysics that makes him go into the realm of aesthetics to release the power of creativity. The effort to discover the essence of the self, no matter what form it takes, brings new forms of normalizing practices. Foucault's entrance into aesthetics is not amoral, but an attempt to show a morality individualized and localized rather than universal. Needless to say, his emphasis on the creative potential of art tends to ignore that art is also a social, historical, and cultural

construction. Such a notion of transgressive self is romantic in its assumption of a singular self *against* society, culture, and institution. However, I would also argue such an opening to something *other* without a resort to metaphysics is necessary for us to think differently and act otherwise. Foucault (1997) is skeptical about any grand or global program of liberation that usually brings back the worst traditions. He prefers specific, local, and partial transformations which can be brought forth by historical analysis and critical attitudes. By the same token, McNay's (1992) normative concern about criteria alternative to "either Enlightenment rationality or to an indiscriminate post-modern celebration of difference" (p. 162) is beyond the point. To set up a norm for self-creation is antithetical to Foucault's project of the self, which is beyond a normative foundation. Foucault is quite explicit that he is not looking for alternatives, but is engaged in a critical project of problematization which makes it necessary to "grasp the points where change is possible and desirable" (1997, p. 316) leading to a transformation of oneself and one's relationships with others and with systems.

McNay (1992) also argues that the Enlightenment ideal of autonomy is retained in Foucault's project, which is why Foucault provides more hope for reconstructing the self than other poststructuralists who claim the dissolution of the subject. I am skeptical about this assertion in a double sense: Is Foucault's ethics of the self embedded in the Enlightenment ideal of an autonomy which is universal, disengaged, and disembodied? Is the notion of autonomy in the Enlightenment sense necessary for rebuilding the self? I prefer to say no to both. While the critique of autonomy was discussed earlier in chapter 2, I would argue that although Foucault does use the term "autonomy" in his elaboration of a critique informed by the Enlightenment, his aesthetic of self-creation is

incompatible with the notion of the autonomous self through universal reason.

Foucault's call for self-invention is not an urge for creating a rationally autonomous self, but is historically, socially, and culturally situated in the critical relationships one establishes with oneself and others. It swirls in a permanent movement through which historical, social, and economic contexts are simultaneously considered and challenged so that new possibilities and more spaces for freedom can be opened up. The notion that individuals can take their liberty to make of themselves whatever they want in accord with universal reason without considering contexts is not Foucault's idea. Freedom does not exist without a context, but can be found through play with games of truth (Miller, 1993).

The theme of disembodiment in the Enlightenment ideal of autonomy is also antithetical to Foucault's notion of the body as a site for creating new forms of subjectivity. The care of the self in Greco-Roman ethics is mainly concerned with the perfection of the soul, and the body is more of an instrument to nurture a beautiful soul. While acknowledging this rational feature, Foucault nevertheless takes further steps to imbue the body with generative and inventive possibilities, especially in his later works. His early works of how "docile bodies" are produced by discipline and bio-power were transformed into an experiment with what he calls "desexualization of pleasure," to invent body beyond disciplinary control. An experiment with bodily pleasures not limited by sexual desires can push one to reach the edge of dissolving the (Cartesian) ego so that the limit of the self can be transcended. Just as the soul is socially produced, the body is also constructed not only physiologically but also socially, culturally, and historically. Foucault's taking the body as the site for "limit-

experiences" with transgressive potential is a challenge that the Enlightenment ideal cannot take.

Perhaps the confusion comes from Foucault's rejection of the global and universal aspect of Kant while he at the same time attempts to develop the theme of an historical-critical attitude from Kant. Whether he can utilize Kant in such a way that Kantian critique is covered by his own concerns for historicity, contingency, and contextualization is not so much my concern. However, I believe that the Foucaultian self cannot be enveloped within the Enlightenment ideal of autonomy. Foucault's notion of freedom, in a similar way, is related to his critical return to Kant while at the same time, having its own peculiar features. In The Use of Pleasure, he contrasts the Greek's notion of freedom as rational self-mastery with the modern notion of the independence of free will, with a certain appreciation for the former. In some later interviews, he is also quite explicit about the difference between liberation and freedom. On the other hand, he also formulates freedom positively as the practice of revolt and negatively as a demand to not be governed, which is closely related to the Kantian notion of freedom and critique. From reading Foucault's discourse as it develops rather than in a monologic way, I believe his vision of freedom is embedded within the Enlightenment ideal but at the same time is beyond it. A paradox within Foucault re-surfaces again: his refusal to make any normative criteria and his call for self-creation devoid of any universal principle. Is not this call itself a kind of principle? If not applicable to everyone, how can one contest the elitist tendency so obvious in the Greco-Roman tradition? Can a simple affirmation of personal choice elude the complexity of identity politics whose openness to the possibility of self-

creation is very much dependent upon a careful consideration of the relationship between self and other? The tie that Foucault attempts to establish among aesthetics, politics, and ethics is a thread that makes his notion of self-creation distinctive and that also arouses strong criticism. Utilizing gender analysis, I am going to make a contestation with the Foucaultian subject in detail.

**Whose Freedom with/out Other? Can I Become Somebody Else?
A Contestation with the Foucaultian Subject**

There is always within each of us something that fights something else.
(Foucault, 1977, quoted in Miller, 1993, p. 278)

The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you
were not in the beginning. (Foucault, 1982b, p. 9)

Foucault is quite explicit that the Hellenistic and Roman world is "a world very strongly marked by the central position of the male personage and by the importance accorded to the masculine role in sexual relationships" (1986, p. 34-35). Subsequently the care of the self is a practice for the privileged Greek free adult males (father, husband, tutor, ruler etc.) who are in control of family and society. However, when Foucault tries to regenerate this tradition for contemporary reflection upon the self, he does not have any in-depth explorations upon how to transform this male ethics and aesthetics and question this masculine way of life. Feminist critiques (Grimshaw, 1993) of such an elitist and male-dominated ethics point to Foucault's inability to have a critical engagement with the ancient ethics. Notions of the Greco-Roman ethics such as rational self-mastery, active subject versus passive object, the predominance of care of self over care for others, and its elitist tendency must be challenged before informing identity politics in our contemporary age.

Actually Foucault does make some effort to counteract the elitist tendency in the ancient Greeks. When discussing the problematic of the love of boys in the Greco-Roman tradition, in which the pleasure of the boy is not taken into account, Foucault asks: "are we able to have an ethics of acts and their pleasures which would be able to take into account the pleasure of the other? Is the pleasure of the other something that can be integrated in our pleasure, without reference either to law, to marriage, to I do not know what?" (1997, p. 258). To take boys as objects for practicing male virility, for controlling one's desires and pleasures, rather than considering them as also subjects of their own pleasures is an ancient principle that must be challenged in order to have any relationships based upon mutual respect. Reluctant to resort to law, marriage, and institutions, Foucault nevertheless leaves it as a question to be addressed. Perhaps the issue is not a technical one of how, for what really needs to be addressed is whether or not we can utilize the ancient ethics without first engaging in a critical encounter with this ethics.

To articulate an aesthetics of the self as a protest against instrumental rationality and the governmentality of normalizing power, Foucault (1984) attempts to rethink the notion of creativity by expanding art beyond the boundary of high culture into everyday life:

What strikes me is the fact that, in our society, art has become something that is related only to objects and not to individuals or to life. That art is something which is specialized or done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object but not our life? (p. 261)

To imbue everyday life with the aesthetics of reinventing the self, Foucault intends to promote a radical rupture with the established, the conventional, and the

given so that imagination and creativity can be released. With self-stylization, everyone can be engaged in this creative activity, although it is not a normative model imposed for everyone to follow, as was prevalent with the Greco-Roman tradition. As McNay (1994) argues, "far from an elitism . . . it is this utopianism that the idea of an aesthetics of existence aims to activate" (p. 147). Although utopianism is not consistent with Foucault's analysis of how subjectivity is situated in the network of power and truth, the aesthetics of the self does sometimes spin away from the contextualized politics of transgression in his desire to pursue something totally new. But first let me address the issue of elitism through the question of whose freedom is registered by the priority of care of the self over care for the other. This question also touches upon basic motifs of the Greco-Roman tradition which must be rethought.

Foucault (1985) is explicit that self-mastery as active freedom to maintain moderation in ancient Greece is man's virtue and a masculine principle. Such a relationship with oneself as an object to elaborate and craft is "isomorphic with the relationship of domination, hierarchy, and authority that one expected, as a man, a free man, to establish over his inferiors" such as women, boys, and slaves. Women's achieving a certain virility, featured as the combination of strength of character and submission to the man, appears as a serving virtue instead of a ruling virtue. The masculine structure of self-mastery also establishes the opposition between activity and passivity with the former relating to masculinity and the latter relating to femininity. Interestingly, passivity also results in immoderation because with the inability to master one's desires, one cannot establish a virile attitude towards oneself to exercise active freedom. By the same token, in men's relationships with boys, a virile man as opposed

to an effeminate man, must be active in mastering himself and ruling the other. What is at issue here are oppositions between subject and object, activity and passivity, and rationality and desire in the relation one establishes with oneself and others. As McNay (1994) points out, Foucault's turn to the aesthetics of Baudelaire to elaborate modern ethics reaffirms, rather than critically encounters, notions of masculine self-determination and self-mastery. Encountering such a male ethic, without a vigorous questioning of these oppositions, how can we extend self-care to others who are usually situated as objects in a passive position? Can this masculine structure of rational conduct be transformed simply by saying we need also to consider the other's pleasure? Isn't there any danger in promoting such an active freedom implicit in a hierarchical relation with oneself and with others? Whose freedom is privileged and whose freedom is at stake? Can the call upon everyone to create one's life as a work of art elude this question? How can the call from the other also be heard?

The relation between self and other is a theme shifting unstably in Foucault's discourse, a style not unfamiliar to his readers. As I have shown in Chapter 2, in Foucault's earlier works, he traces historically how the subject of universal reason has regulated and controlled the Other such as people with madness, criminals, or the sick. When an essentialistic notion of the Other is rejected, Foucault is on the path to make otherness within and outside of the subject initiate a mobilized and fluid movement which will destabilize identity formation. On the other hand, however, when Foucault shifts his attention to the self, which again is not essentialized, the struggle of the other becomes shadowed within the privilege of self-care. Still it is more complicated than this. Foucault (1975) actually claims the Other in a surprising way

when he regards Pierre Riviere's memoir of his own murders as singular, extraordinary, remarkable and glorious. He believes such a double subject of the crime and the text shows "how *men* have been able to rise against power, traverse the law, and expose themselves to death through death" (p. 206; emphasis added). Yes, again, men. While I do not want to go as far as Miller (1993) to claim that Foucault regard Riviere's murders as "a work of art," I find here an interesting twist that the other--a mad (not indisputable) criminal--is actually transformed into the self capable of creative activity. Such a transformation of the other into subject which Foucault actually does not explore explicitly in terms of the relationships between self and other raises another important question to which I will return: What is the relation between the self and institutions, governments, or law?

In Foucault's aesthetics of the self, the relationship between self and oneself is privileged over the relationship between self and other. His argument is that as long as self forms a proper relationship with oneself, one's relationship with others will be conducted properly. Excess or abuse of power happens because one does not take proper care of one's self. However, how can one who takes oneself as the object of elaboration--a relation of domination over oneself--handle the violence of objectification in his relationship with others? In other words, how can the split between subject and object in Foucault's ethics of self-care not project objectification upon others? By contrast, Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (1993) who shares with Foucault's idea about selfhood as an unending process of creation and re-creation, nevertheless situates self and other in a relationship of simultaneity in difference. For Bakhtin, the "I-for-myself" does not really exist and the self is co-authored with

others. Discussing the relationship between author and hero in polyphonic novels such as Dostoevsky's works, Bakhtin (1984) argues for a new authorial position to permit the independence and freedom of the hero to answer back and surprise the author. Such a relationship between self and other enables both to become active consciousnesses and addresses the other as other. Polyphony also happens within the self, making the self emergent and creative. Polyphonic dialogue opens a complicated and multilayered relationship between hero and author and also invites the reader to enter into the dialogue. In this way, differences and individuality can be promoted through open-ended interaction. Obviously Foucault is very concerned about the issue of differences and individual originality, but his ethics of the self fails to directly address how to work through differences within and between self and other without doing violence to either one. Is not Smith (1996) right in claiming that the decentering of the subject without giving up the duality of subject and object is still another form of the Self over the Other? While both Bakhtin and Foucault reject essentialistic notions of the self and normative criteria, Bakhtin's notion of the relationship between self and other deals more successfully than Foucault with the duality between subject and object, and activity and passivity. To allow the other (of the self and of others) to assume the position as an active subject, Bakhtin works around the violence of objectifying others/otherness to create new forms of inter/subjectivity.

The duality of subject and object in Foucault's work is hardly compatible with feminist critiques of such a dichotomy. Historically in Western thought men as rulers are subjects while women are objects in obedience, which Foucault himself also recognizes. Still his aesthetics of the self is not immune to the theme, running from the

ancient Greeks into the modern self, that an active subject acts upon an objectified world. To challenge such a tradition, it is not enough to relocate women's status as subjects or create a more generative intersubjective space. What is at issue is the very dualism between subject and object that gendered analysis needs to problematize. In other words, it is the question of how to transform the way we make sense of the world. Can we not rethink the relation between the two not in a sense of domination but more in an intertwining space so that self, other, and the world can be engaged in a process of co-emergence, co-becoming and co-transformation through an interactive mode? Can we not break through the confinement of object by the domination of subject in thinking about human relations?

The relationship between self and other situated in social contexts in Foucault's discourse can be tricky, on feminists disagree among one another. McLaren (1997) argues that the embeddness of Foucault's ethics of self care within social practices, discourses, and institutions is compatible with the feminist notion of relational subject. The Foucaultian subject based upon a social, political, and cultural web of relationships and interconnections echoes feminist critiques of the transcendental subject in favor of an embodied self. On the other hand, though, McNay (1992) argues, the exercises of the self do not take into account how social contexts influence the aesthetics of existence. She believes that "Foucault poses a notion of isolated self-experimentation in which questions of social interaction and respect for others are effectively bypassed" (p. 174). Which face is truer of Foucault? Perhaps both are true considering the inherent paradox within his discourse. He situates the ethics of the self at the edge of historical, social, and political limits, but this ethics focuses mainly on the subject without serious

consideration of how to handle the power structure implicit in social relationships. To accuse the Foucaultian self of being isolated, however, ignores his emphasis upon the relational aspect of the subject in marriage, mentorship, friendship, and erotic relations. I would rather say that the Foucaultian subject is not as interactive and dialogic as a creative notion of the self can be.

I believe the problematic of the Foucaultian self is less about its thrust into aesthetics for the inspiration of imagination and creativity although as I have pointed out an uncritical approach to aesthetics itself is problematic. It is more about an uncritical approach to the Greco-Roman tradition--which has certain historical continuity with the modern version of the self--that needs to be challenged. After encountering the problematic of self formation in male ethics and making a gendered analysis of the relationship between self and other, I would argue, Foucault's privilege of self-fashioning can be utilized for women's self-claiming. Historically, self-sacrifice and dependence are women's virtues and taking care of others is women's obligation. To break with such a chain, can we not *transform*--not merely *extend*--Foucaultian ethics of self-care into a gendered ethics of identity building? Considering the influence of gender on the aesthetics of existence, can we not construct women's versions of self-creation without abandoning a relational view of the subject? Actually Foucault's focus on the work that one does on oneself is a useful concept for understanding how important it is for women to turn to themselves for possible transformative empowering. But such an intensified relationship with the self, for women, must consider the hierarchical social contexts in which women are situated, so that women can reflect upon the social construction of the self in its relationship with others in

search of more freedom. In this sense, the struggle with the self in gendered self-care is not so much with the self as with taking the self as the site for registering and contesting social injustice. Woman does not really have a self because of social conditions and cultural bias, but when she begins to create her own sense of self, she also participates in initiating social transformation. Before women theorists can utilize Foucault's ideas about the subject, we need to continue untangling Foucault's discourse.

The duality between rationality and desire is another interesting thread to follow in Foucault's dilemmas. The Enlightenment dichotomy between reason and emotion is one target of feminist critiques. Although the Greco-Roman tradition has a much more positive attitude towards body, emotion, and desire, the duality of soul over body is still an important message for the care of the self. Foucault argues that the regulation of desires and sexuality in the Greco-Roman ethic does not resort to universal law, the deciphering of truth in the self, and its purifying hermeneutics. In this sense, without codification and without the need to become evil or bad, the body is under the gaze of the soul. Still, though, it is clear that rational control of desires and conduct is a preferable principle for a fulfilling life. Without problematizing the ancient notion of rationality in its dominance over desires, Foucault takes a difficult jump into body as the site for creating new forms of subjectivity. Without re-articulating the relationship between body and soul, Foucault takes a desexualized perspective envisaging a new self born from experiencing and experimenting with bodily pleasure. To push this step to an extreme, he (1978) argues that decriminalization of all sexual conduct such as rape--a outrageous claim--is necessary to free sexuality from the control of the state. Such an effort to decenter sexuality actually fails to recognize sexual differences and their social

construction through a hierarchical system. As McNay (1992) points out, to treat rape only as an act of physical violence overlooks the fact that "violence in rape is fundamentally derived from the asymmetrical construction of sexual relations in modern society" and such a treatment "would further legitimize the sexual oppression of women" (p. 45). That he ignores sexual differences and approaches the body merely as a male version is the charge many feminists make against Foucault's gender blindness (McNay, 1992; Hekman, 1996). If the body is socially constructed, gender difference is an important issue that cannot be avoided.

Foucault's argument for breaking the connection between law and crime is also related to the question I have already asked: What is the relationship between the transgressive self and law? Should juridical law necessarily be negated? Can popular practice beyond juridical proceedings replace law and the state to provide more protection of individuals as Foucault seems to claim (Miller, 1993)? The Foucaultian subject integrates two faces: One is constitutive, acting upon oneself and the world; the other is being constituted socially, historically, and politically. If we situate the transgressive potential of the self in a dynamic interplay between constituting and constituted aspects of the subject, what is expected to follow is that the self can go beyond social institutions or tantalization of individuality but cannot have a full break with them. Actually a full break is not only impossible but is also unnecessary because of the situatedness of the self in social contexts and nondualistic relationships between self and society. However, when Foucault talks about decriminalization of sexuality, the power of mass justice, and the glory of murder, he indeed seems to be promoting a self against institutions rather than forming a more dynamic relationships between the

two. Actually, law is not necessarily bad and it indeed provides certain protection for individuals, and the struggle for legal rights is often an important part of women's movements to counteract female subordination. In the case of Riviere, whatever beauty is in his writings, his deliberate authoring of shocking murders is not only far beyond a transgressive act, but leads to destruction of both self and others.

In Foucault's later works, although the drama of a rebellious and militant individual against society is eased, the rejection of the external is transported into a rupture with oneself and a conversion of one's self. He claims repeatedly, in several interviews, that he writes in order to become somebody else, echoing his hope for "non-identity" in the late fifties (Miller, 1993). Such an enthusiasm for something completely new, absolutely other or utterly beautiful indicates a complicated link between the Foucaultian subject and the Romantic notion of an original and singular self free from the universal. According to Charles Taylor (1989), the modern sense of the self is greatly influenced by an aesthetic expressivism embarked on by Montaigne who emphasizes the unrepeatable differences in each individual's original self-exploration and self-discovery. Such a path is unique for each person who does not follow a road to a universal essence of selfhood, which is echoed in Foucault's deep concerns with unique individuality free from control under the totality of individualization. I can also hear Rousseau's whisper of a corrupted society versus an individual educated through nature in Foucault's deep distrust of civilization and his call for individuals to think otherwise (Miller, 1993, p. 200). Although Foucault has no fancy feeling about nature, he shifts the relationship between self and nature to self's relation with oneself. However, on the other hand, two assumptions of aesthetic expressivism are rejected by

Foucault. One is the assumption of an essential and unitary self presupposed in the search for self-discovery and self-expression. Foucault is more concerned about self-creation than about searching for a nonexistent essence of the self even in its particularity. The other is the obligation of turning inward to reach self-knowledge. In Foucault's ethics of the self, with the acknowledgement of the role of self-knowledge, an intense interiority of self-examination for truth has been transformed into outward efforts towards self-stylization. Whether or not it comes from the Romantic epoch, Foucault's promise that we can work on ourselves to create and re-create our identities, our bodies, our souls, and our lifestyles beyond boundaries is something that often grips our imagination.

I often have this fantasy: If only I could go to a different place where I knew no one and no one knew me, I could have a new self out of this utter "non-identity." I did move, from one city to another city to yet another, from one country to another country, and I did change, but I could never become "someone else" or create a completely new self, however much I wanted to do so. To reintegrate the dissolute self may help me reach another level of the self or add another layer of the self but I can never be completely different. More often than not, when I meet my old friends after leaving them for quite a while, they exclaim: "Hi, Hongyu, you are still the same!" Two Chinese directly commented about my change after my journey to the United States: Mother and my Chinese major professor, one on the personal me, the other on the intellectual me. Such a co-existence of non-change and change is situated in the dynamics of the self, making it impossible and also not necessary to claim one in the denial of the other.

When I read Foucault following the development of his discourses, I often can understand his theory of knowledge, power, and subjectivity in a more complicated and interconnected way. However, if I focus on his works in a certain period of time, I might become quite puzzled. When I want to make a general claim, I often pause and think: "Wait a minute! He says so and so here, but he says otherwise in other works." Certainly I would not want to attribute to him the claim "to become someone else" considering his commitment to analyzing the historicity and social construction of the self. However he did say so. Foucault claims, "what must be produced is something that absolutely does not exist, about which we know nothing...the creation of something totally different, an innovation" (quoted in Miller, 1993, p. 336). Such a hope, to some degree, is consistent with the Western concept of creation *ex nihilo* in contrast to the Chinese notion of creation in a continuum of flow. Can we create anything utterly different? Is it possible for anyone to create a completely "different kind of person with a different kind of soul and a different kind of body?" (Miller, 1993, p. 345)

In Foucault's analysis of the care of the self, there is a peculiar residue of confusion. On the one hand, he emphasizes that self-renunciation cannot be attached to the cultivation of the self in order that the self not be shadowed by sacrificial ethics. On the other hand, his call for a rupture with oneself and one's tradition necessarily requires giving up a certain part of the self. Between the two there is an ambiguous zone in which the individual can decide his style of life only in an uncertain way. To make it more complex, while he claims that the technologies of self-sacrifice need to be gotten rid of, he at the same time ponders the affinities between ancient asceticism and modern

writing in terms of sacrifice and self-negation (Miller, 1993, p. 324-25). His claim to become someone else is also simultaneous with his effort to become what one is.

I suspect in the desire for becoming somebody else, there is a certain element of self-denial, which in my case is gendered (and also cultural: see the next chapter). My first encounter with Foucault carried me away through his aesthetics of imagination and creativity and his promise of becoming different. Re-reading him this time, though, makes me more skeptical: before I can claim myself, can I create a new self? The time period in between coincided with my struggle in searching for a path rising from the deepest valley in which the self is dissolute. Only when I do not have that fantasy of becoming a completely new self can I gradually accept what I am and strive for becoming more than what I am. Perhaps self-negation is something many people have to face one way or another. So the issue is more about how to deal with self-denial than about merely pointing out how negative it is, wherein Foucault nevertheless provides important insights.

I am now more willing to say that I write in order to become myself. And this term "become" implies an open system in which emergence and creativity dwell. Do I need to become somebody else before I can become myself, or do I need to become myself before I can become somebody else? Perhaps there is no "before" and "after." It is a simultaneous intertwining process of becoming that is never really united. This is the paradox of the self, the aporia of self and other, and the double gesture of affirming the self's responsibility. In this sense, inconsistencies and contradictions in Foucault's discourses about subjectivity, power, and truth provide provocative questions to help us to re-think reality, life, and self in a different way.

Problematizing Foucaultian subject's uncritical approach to ancient male-dominated ethics of the self in its duality does not mean dismissing its great potential for providing insights to address feminist concerns about identity and politics. Foucault's simultaneous emphasis upon the priority of self-formation over the concern of others and the destabilizing nature of self-creation points to a direction in which women affirm their identities, yet at the same time this affirmation is situated in a constant movement of creating new landscapes of subjectivity. McNay (1992) argues for taking Foucault's discourse as a challenge to re-think a gendered self:

[I]t is more fruitful not simply to accuse Foucault of a straightforward 'gender blindness' in his ethics of the self, but rather to invert the problem and ask how his work presents a challenge to feminists to think of an ethics which does not rest on a fixed or naturalized notion of 'woman'.
(p. 112)

To take this challenge, women are faced with a difficult question: Since historically women do not really have a self, is women's self-creation possible without its being based upon a unified notion of the female subject? If women do not have a stable ground on which to identify themselves, where can their resistance come from?

Jana Sawick (1991, 1994) believes that the intention of empowering women cannot be fulfilled by essentialistic discourses and practices. She traces the history of feminism as it searches for the essence of femininity and its failure to consider differences across class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, which leads to exclusions and repression. Judith Butler (1995) also argues that the very term "woman" should be contested so that multiplicity and fluidity in being a woman is made possible. According to Foucault, the category and classification of identity is a practice of domination, but plural and diverse points of resistance can be registered by

destabilizing the self. I believe it is true that the moral code of being a good woman as defined by a hierarchical society indeed plays its suppressive role in shaping woman's subjectivity by imposing a fixed identity. To go beyond such an externally imposed identity, we do need to re-define the subject of woman: not to search for another essence, but to imagine woman's life otherwise and create woman's self otherwise. Without a stable foundation, such a project of becoming a unique woman as she wants to be is ambiguous and uncertain, but it is much more open to differences which can diversify resistance in a coalition with other groups also fighting for freedom. When resistance is plural and spreads out through power relationships, it can transform the whole system into a new direction.

Although Foucaultian ethics of self-creation is heuristic to feminist concerns, Swicki (1991) warns that "Foucault's emphasis on the dangers of identity formation can all too easily become the basis for repudiating women's struggles to attain a sense of identity not defined by patriarchal interest" (p. 105). Her worry is real. When self-displacement is emphasized too much, it might form a conspiracy with social domination through self-denial of women. An affirmative claim of the self for women has a strategic value to further the pursuit of freedom. The need for self-affirmation, self-claiming, and self-esteem cannot be overemphasized in feminist oppositional discourses and practices. However, to live through the circulation of power relationships but maintain a critical stance of reflection, it is necessary to have a certain distance from an established identity and a vigilance against self-closure in identity politics. Still, to reject a unified notion of identity does not imply the collapse of the self. The issue is, rather, how we perceive and approach our identities, and how we can

transform identity formation into a process of constantly changing our relationships with ourselves and our traditions so that the limit of subjectivity can be expanded. In this way, we can be engaged in concrete transformations for new possibilities: "a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty" (Foucault, 1997, p. 319). The paradoxes of the Foucaultian subject can only be lived with in a self-affirmative way for women.

Furthermore, I would argue, to utilize Foucault's ideas, women also need to re-think the relationships between soul and body, rationality and desire, self and other, and subject and object, which are still present in duality in Foucault's works. To challenge Foucault's neglect for gendered reality, women's experiences must also be brought in to contest this duality and transform it into a more interactive and dynamic view. While the privilege of the former over the latter is usually compatible with women's own status, the challenge is--to borrow Foucault's strategy--not to turn the duality upside down, but to reconstruct and re-appropriate relationships in a creative and transformative way.

Before I look more closely into woman's self, Foucault's discussion of ancient ethics in Western civilization brings me back to the other side of the ocean: How is the Chinese self constructed? What can the evolution of a relational notion of the Chinese self as a parallel of Western self-cultivation tell us? How does the well-known sexism with its culmination in footbinding in China play out its own drama? Are gender biases such as the Western duality in its correspondence with sexual differences applicable to other cultures? What can the Foucaultian subject offer to the Chinese self and can the Chinese self provide any possibility for rethinking the Western dualism of its subject? I

am moving on to the Confucian self to depict a very different landscape of the self in the next chapter. I will journey back to the issue of woman's self after a cross-cultural inquiry of the Foucaultian subject and the Confucian self to address the problematic of gendered identity politics.

Notes

1. Practices of Christianity are different and to take Christianity as a whole can be problematic. Even confessional practices may not always be universalized as one assumes. Without a background in Christianity, I would not venture to make detailed arguments, but only want to point out that reducing the variety of Christian practices to one principle does not do justice to the inner complexity of Christianity.
2. Is self-sacrifice necessarily negative? I would argue not, as long as it is not a blind obedience to laws and authorities. Without going into religions, I will focus on cultural and gendered consideration of self-sacrifice. The Chinese self is always related to others, and a relational notion of the self asks one to give up certain aspects of oneself to be able to connect to others in a contextualized way. Sometimes such self-sacrifice is necessary under the limitations of living resources and spaces. Speaking of women's own experiences, self-sacrifice for children and family is part of their lives. Does simply putting self-care in priority over concerns about others (Foucault's argument) give enough credit to women's own ways of thinking and living? I believe that the potential of self-care for women attending to their own personal cultivation is more likely to be realized without setting up the dichotomy of self-sacrifice and self-creation.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONFUCIAN SELF AND ECOLOGY OF PERSONAL CULTIVATION

When I was an undergraduate student, I had a professor who was affectionately called by students “a great Confucian.” He taught me about Confucius as an educator, and I wrote a long paper on Confucius and education in his class--my first serious academic work. Whenever I had confusion or doubts about my future, I would turn to him for guidance. Every time he would tell me in his uniquely calm way to keep going and cultivate a rich inner life regardless of the turbulent external world--a very Confucian way of keeping peace with oneself and with world. Before I left for Shanghai to pursue my graduate studies, I went to his home one night to say goodbye. When I walked down the corridor in the darkness, he was holding a flashlight behind me to light up the path under my feet. Light. Held by a Confucian for me, for my future. A powerful image I have always kept deeply in my heart. Somehow this image gradually became vague during my journey to the West. Until one day, in the middle of my struggling with Confucianism in the United States, this image suddenly returned. I knew at that moment that despite all odds and difficulties, I was going to carry and renew this light. It is a light within, shining a continuous path of an old civilization that could be re-generated young again, a part of me already existing before I was born.

Confucianism: Personal Cultivation as a Communal and Holistic Process

[I]n Confucianism . . . the identity of each person is not in his or her independent existence, but in his or her relations to the cosmic principles, to other people, to social communities, and to his or her own moral cultivation by which the self is brought into maturity.

(Yao Xinzong, 1996, p. 83)

The return to Confucianism is an ambiguous project for me not only because it has been condemned so long for the failure of Chinese culture, but also because it is so

notorious for suppressing women. As a woman constantly struggling to gain and regain a certain sense of the self, why do I not just take an easy flight away from it? Why do I bother to initiate this unexpected return? Why does the poststructural critique of the self in the West lead me to reclaim this part of my traditions? Is Confucianism as Father somehow transformed into more of Mother because of a complicated interplay between East and West? Or is it still alive in my heart calling me to listen carefully? Or is there a potential within Confucianism that has been ignored while Chinese people have been preoccupied by the modernization of both country and culture (defined, by and large, by the West)? If what is strange to the self could be the otherness of the self within, what is familiar to the self could have other potential to be regenerated into something new. Still, carrying my own puzzlement, I venture into the paradoxical, the ambiguous, and the unexpected: I have not lost my faith in this light, no matter where it leads me through my journey.

The efforts to reclaim the Confucian self in its human and cosmic relatedness as an alternative to Western individualism are hardly my own. Scholars in different academic areas, Chinese or Westerners, make such a call (De Bary, 1991a; Munro, 1985; Tu, 1979, 1985; Yao, 1996). Interestingly, scholars in Mainland China (Jin & Liu, 1984; Xu, 1994; Zhuang, 1997) are much more critical towards Confucianism, while scholars in Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas Chinese scholars (Lin, 1983, 1986; Liu, 1979; Liu, 1989; Mou, 1997; Zhou, 1981) are much more optimistic about its possibility. Gan Yang, the editor of a large series of books entitled Culture: China and the World introducing Western thoughts into China, radically claims: "The best method to carry forward traditions is anti-tradition" (Quoted in Zhuang, 1997, p. 197). Tu Wei-

ming at Harvard University on the other side of the ocean, on the other hand, painstakingly attempts to reconstruct Confucianism on a worldwide basis. I am deeply suspicious of any efforts to break with the past completely. As Foucault (1997) points out, such a revolution may lead to the return of the worst part of traditions. The negation of tradition cannot bring enlightenment, as the Cultural Revolution has demonstrated. Wang (2000) also argues that reflection, reconstruction, and regeneration of cultural traditions are necessary for rethinking educational modernization and comparative education. On the other hand, Tu's intention to reconstruct a metaphysics out of Confucianism is also problematic to me. What I am more concerned with here is how to conduct genuine dialogues and conversations both within and between cultures to refigure the portrait of the human self. Conversation, dialogue, reflection, and critique are much more crucial for constructing new landscapes of humanity than a simple "anti" or another mode of metaphysics. How can we reclaim our own traditions in such a way that transformation of the past can be risked for new forms of life? How can we open up our own horizons to the otherness and the strangeness of different cultures in such a way that the fullness of the self can be brought into shared human understanding? How can we regenerate our traditions through conversations with other cultures but without assuming that our way is the only path leading to new possibilities in life? How can we share with, interact with, and learn from each other and from the past without doing violence to either side? Perhaps one way to do it is to join in the "complicated conversation" (Pinar et al., 1995) that is curriculum to explore new directions of both self and world on the path to become different.

My own return to Confucianism actually happened with my simultaneous reading of Foucault's genealogical analysis of the care of the self, but it was the Chinese scholar and novelist Lin Yutang's book From Pagan to Christian (1959) that really led me into the door of Confucianism. I still remember the moment of running into his statement that self-cultivation lies at the heart of Confucianism: How could that be? I asked myself aloud. I never really thought that in Confucianism there was any notion of the self! As I toured with Lin (1959) together through "the mansion of Confucius," "the peak of Mount Tao," and "the dissolving mist of Buddhism," I realized how much homework I needed to do with my own traditions. When I first traveled back to China, observing the Chinese way of life from an outsider's angle to certain degree, this urge to go back to my own spiritual roots was intensified. With a newly discovered enthusiasm, I plunged myself into both the classical literature and the contemporary studies of Confucianism. The more I probed, the more I asked myself: How has the original idea of Confucianism turned into a dogma which has suppressed individual freedom for so long? What role does the institutionalized practice of Confucianism play in obscuring Confucius' thoughts on personal cultivation and social order? How can we regenerate this tradition without being caught in its shadow? What can the Confucian self offer to the contemporary life? I became intrigued by the development of classical Confucianism into Neo-Confucianism in the context of the institutionization of Confucianism and how this evolution suppressed the transformative potential of Confucian personal cultivation in its communal, holistic, and cosmic relatedness. Foucault has taught me that history can be read in a discontinuous and non-linear way. More often than not, scholars, whether they hold positive or negative attitudes towards

Confucianism, talk about classical Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism as a whole. For them there is a natural flow between the two rather than any break or discontinuity. The disenchantment with metaphysics in the poststructural critiques encourages me to approach Neo-Confucianism through a much more critical perspective. I would like to argue, as I am going to do next, that it is the discontinuity between the two that provides the promise of regenerating the Confucian self for rethinking the issue of subject and identity politics. Let me first start with classical Confucianism.

In The Great Learning, one of the four Confucianism classics, it is clearly stated that "from the emperor down to the common people, all must consider the cultivation of the person as the root of all. It cannot be that, when the root is neglected, what springs from it will be well-ordered."¹ For Confucius (551-478 B.C.), personal cultivation² is fundamental to the development of both individuals and society, and social reforms must be achieved by promoting personal transformation. When personal cultivation as the root is firmly established, harmonious human relationships and social peace will become a natural outgrowth as branches. Confucius does not bother to formulate an abstract idea of the self or an essentialistic view about human nature to uphold his scheme for personal cultivation. He is much more concerned with how to bring out the best in humanity by education and personal cultivation than with metaphysical speculations about human nature. In this way, a process concept of the self is developed, in which the self is engaged in a constant transformation of one's virtues and characters to become fully human. This organic growth of the self is achieved by harmonizing one's becoming with social relations and further with cosmic processes.

As Hall and Ames (1987) suggest, different from Western transcendental traditions which support a substance view of the self, the Confucian self is based upon an ontology of events, not one of substances. While transcendental principles define the Western essential nature of the self, the Confucian immanent view of the world situates the self within its concrete interactions with its particular contexts. As a result, the Confucian self is engaged in a process of emergence and becoming, dependent upon specific events which both determine and are determined by contexts. In such a process, one's dispositions, characters and behaviors are cultivated and transformed toward the full realization of humanity.

In such an emergent notion of the self, selfhood becomes a life-long project which is always yet to be achieved, unfolding a process of continuous transformation and becoming. Zeng Zi (Tseng Tzu), one of Confucius' favorite disciples, once exclaimed that the task of fulfilling humanity is so heavy because it is a ceaseless journey which never ends before death.³ Confucius' comment on the continuous flow of the water⁴ is often interpreted as implying an endless process of self-realization (Tu, 1979, p. 36). The journey of realizing and transforming the Way must be constantly renewed daily through contextualized events. There is a saying in The Great Learning that is often quoted: "If you can renovate yourself one day, then you can do so every day, and keep doing so day after day."⁵

This journey, which is long and continuous, can only be undertaken in a process of proper cultivation but cannot be hurried. There is an interesting fable⁶ in Mencius--one of four Confucian classics--which tells the story of a farmer who was so eager to get in his crop that he pulled all the shoots one by one to help them grow. As a result of

his efforts, all the shoots withered. Personal cultivation, like the planting of crops, should follow its own growing rhythm and the attempt to get on quickly without everlasting and consistent effort cannot work magic.

Confucius himself sets up an example of life-long devotion to realization of the Way: "At fifteen I set my heart upon learning. At thirty I established myself [in accordance with ritual]. At forty I no longer had doubts. At fifty I realized the Mandate (*ming*) of Heaven. At sixty I was at ease with what I heard. At seventy I could follow my heart without transgressing what was right."⁷ This is not a model for everyone to follow because the paths of self-realization and self-transformation are varied. But it does clearly show Confucius' commitment to constantly cultivating the self. Confucianism believes that everyone has the capacity to become a sage and the Confucian confidence in the human capacity for personal transformation through education makes many Confucians well-known educators as well as thinkers. Confucius was a highly revered educator who insisted that education is for everyone, not just the elite,⁸ and laid out many insightful principles for Chinese education. Consistent with his worldview, Confucius was a master, teaching students in accordance with their aptitudes. Some stories recorded in The Analects depict how Confucius responded to the same question differently to different disciples. For example, both Zilu and Ran You asked whether they should immediately carry into practice what they heard. Confucius answered yes to Ran You but told Zilu that his father and elder brothers must be consulted first. Another disciple was confused by Confucius' different answers and asked why. Confucius explained, "You is retiring and slow; therefore, I urged him forward. Zilu is too audacious; therefore, I kept him

back."⁹ What is shown in this story is Confucius' wisdom in bringing out the best part of his disciples by forming an interactive relationship with each disciple according to his own personal style. Such a contextualized mode of teaching is compatible with his philosophy of cultivating the self within its concrete and particular situations.

In The Great Learning, the eight steps of personal cultivation which are formulated serve as a general scheme for the moral and educational development of individuals and for subsequent social well being and harmony:

When things are investigated, knowledge is achieved. When knowledge is achieved, then one reaches sincerity of thoughts. When one reaches the sincerity of thoughts, the rightness of heart comes. With the rightness of heart, the person can be cultivated. When the person is cultivated, the family life can be regulated. When the family life is regulated, the State can be rightly governed. When the State is rightly governed, the whole world can be made peaceful.¹⁰

The process of personal cultivation outlined in this passage begins with understanding the world by investigating things and extending knowledge; centers around personal and moral cultivation inward; and extends outward to regulate the family, the state, and the world by a continuing expansion of one's virtue throughout the ever-broadening circles of society. This is an ideal for cultivating of one's humanity by assisting all people to accomplish their own self-perfection. As a result, personal cultivation cannot be separated from social participation and public responsibility. The road to personal cultivation, which is communal and holistic, is based upon ever-enlarging social and cosmic relationships and involves the development of the whole person in terms of intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual cultivation.

As Tu (1985) argues, the Confucian self located in the web of human relationships is an open system in which the self is constantly engaged with others and

is responsive and receptive to the world and culture so that the self can be constantly expanded, renewed, and transformed. The sense of individuals as isolated entities or private egos cannot be found in the Confucian self. Fulfillment for the individual is impossible without relating to others in a social and moral context. The Confucian Golden Rule in both its own and its positive sense (see chapter 2) requires certain reciprocity and mutual respect in a constructive relationship between self and others.

Zeng Zi asked himself three questions for daily self-examination: "Whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; whether, in interaction with friends, I may have been not sincere; whether I may have not mastered and practiced the instructions of my teacher."¹¹ It is obvious that the focus of Confucian self-examination is almost exclusively on the relationships between self and others, a focus which is very different from the Greco-Roman tradition of self-examination although both aim at self-mastery. These two traditions hold different attitudes towards the relationship between self and other.

Confucius emphasizes the importance of learning from others and making constructive friendships for one's personal cultivation. He says, "When I walk along with several others, there must be somebody who can be my teacher: I will follow their good manners and correct their bad manners."¹² He also comments: "There are three friendships which are beneficial and three which are injurious. Friendship with the upright; friendship with the sincere; and friendship with the knowledgeable: these are beneficial. Friendship with the flatterers; friendship with the double-faced; and friendship with the glib-tongued: these are injurious"¹³ From these statements, we can see that openness to others must be accompanied with a critical attitude made possible

by an internal sense of what is good and what is right. Without this adherence to principle and a sense of inner direction, a constructive and transformative relation between self and others cannot be formed.

Confucians usually have a strong sense of a personal, moral mission even in conditions of poverty, hardship, or adversity. The Way is not externally imposed but must be realized from within. It requires a person to cultivate an inner sense of morality, coping with all kinds of difficulties or resisting the temptation of to only seek external rewards. The plum blossom, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum, called the four noble men in traditional Chinese painting and poetry, symbolize the inner power of a person to maintain moral integrity overcoming the adversity of the environment. The ability to keep pursuing the path to the Way is very important for the possibility of personal transformation. In contrast to the common belief that Confucians advocate mere obedience to authority, struggles against despotism and autocracy are essential virtues for realizing the Way. Independent personality is a cherished virtue a Confucian must be able to preserve and pursue.

"In ancient times, men learned for the sake of the self. Nowadays, men learn for the sake of others."¹⁴ Learning for the sake of the self rather than the approval of others implies that self-cultivation is an end in itself and self-realization is immanent in a person's every effort to achieve humanity. Therefore, to understand personal cultivation as a communal act we must understand the complex and dynamic interaction between self and others which is rooted in personal cultivation but at the same time reaches outward to others to form a constructive interplay.

Personal cultivation is not only a communal act, but also a holistic process.

Literally, the Chinese characters for personal cultivation (*hsiu-shen*) refer to the cultivation of the body, which makes explicit the unity between body and mind in its holistic view of the human person.¹⁵ Six arts advocated by Confucius for his followers to learn include ritual, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and calculations, which are intended to cultivate a person both mentally and physically, both cognitively and aesthetically, both intellectually and experientially. The project of personal cultivation outlined by Confucius begins with poetry, establishes itself through ritual, and achieves by music.¹⁶ The study of poetry provides stimulation for the mind, guidance for harmonizing emotions and feelings, and opportunities for self-contemplation. The establishment of the ritual cultivates one's character, directs human emotions, and takes social responsibilities in the context of human-relatedness and cultural values. The fruition of a long process of personal cultivation is embodied in the flowing harmony of music, which symbolizes achievement of the unity of the whole person in oneness with the world.

For Confucius, as Hall and Ames (1987) point out, thinking is not abstract reasoning or representing an objective reality, but is activities which unite body and mind, emotion and intellect, fact and value, and knowledge and action. Personal participation and involvement are also required in knowing: "They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who find pleasure in it."¹⁷ Oneness of knowing and doing, oneness of emotion and scene, and oneness of humanity and universe characterize Confucian philosophy and cosmology. As Tu (1985) argues, Confucius' notion of personal cultivation is centered on moral

character formation but involves every aspect of humanity. Tu defines it as "becoming aesthetically refined, morally excellent and religiously profound" (p. 52). This holistic notion of self is obviously different from the Cartesian notion of self as a thinking subject in search of objective truth in its dualism between mind and body, between subject and object, with the former dominating the latter.

The concept of self as relational and holistic is further expanded by the notion of the unity between humanity and the universe. Different from the Western tradition of *creatio ex nihilo*, the universe in classical Chinese thought is regarded as a spontaneously self-generating cosmos,¹⁸ with humanity and divinity organically related to each other in a shared continuum. Through attuning the self to the spirit of the universe, the self is simultaneously dissolved and enlarged as a result of participating in the transformation of the ever-expanding cosmos: the self becomes a part of the creative cosmic processes. In traditional Chinese landscape paintings, human figures, if there are any, usually appear in a small, vague, and sometimes almost invisible sketch, which symbolizes the embeddedness of humanity within nature.

As Zi Si (Tsesze, grandson of Confucius) says, "To arrive at a true understanding by realizing one's true self is called (the way of) nature. To realize one's true self from understanding (of the universe) is called (the way of) culture. Who has realized his true self gains thereby understanding. Who has gained a (complete) understanding finds his true self."¹⁹ By this way, the organic growth of humanity is in accordance with the fulfillment of the way of the universe. According to The Doctrine of the Mean,²⁰ another Confucian classic, the full development of the self can give full development to the nature of creatures and things, and furthermore help nature in

nourishing and sustaining life. As a result of this expansive realization, the self forms a trinity with earth and heaven. This organic process, as Yao (1996) points out, requires bringing "all emotions and feelings and actions into harmony" (p. 189). Harmony, an important tenet of The Doctrine of the Mean, requires an appropriate degree of balance between human emotions and actions. Therefore, personal cultivation in its communal and holistic process in an ultimate sense achieves unity between the earth, heaven, and humanity (the self).

Confucianism as the State Cult, Neo-Confucianism, and the Critique of Moral Reason

With its emphasis on extending the self through social and cosmic relationships to embrace humanity and the universe, Confucianism pays more attention to the commonality of humanity than to its differences. As a result, it has a certain tendency to suppress individuality and promote social hierarchy. It is also a patriarchal discourse in which women are inferior to men. Confucius has a famous dictum: "Only women and inferior men are difficult to deal with."²¹ However, this tendency was pushed to its extreme with the institutionalization of Confucianism and in Neo-Confucianism with its metaphysics of moral reason. According to Birge (1989), the decline of women's status occurred during the Song dynasty (960-1276 A.D.), a decline due to the influence of the new doctrine of Neo-Confucianism. In this doctrine, more severe forms and practices of subjugation as the way of Heaven were imposed upon women. I will return to the influence of Neo-Confucianism on women later.

I still remember the sorrow and horror caused by reading Ba Jin's (Pa Chin) novel, Family (1972/1931), which depicts the fall of a feudal family and the misery inflicted by familial moral codes upon young people. Ye Xin's novel Family Education,

a contemporary story of how patriarchal control influences the fate of a younger generation, also deeply touched my heart. I was particularly dismayed by the tragic fates of young women in these novels who were destroyed or even murdered by the patriarchal family system. A more chilling one, Diary of a Madman (1990/1918), written by Lu Xun (Lu Hsun, 1881-1936) who is called “Nietzsche in China”, asserts a powerful outcry against *cannibalistic* feudal ethics. The madman reads through a history book whose every page is filled with words like benevolence, righteousness, and morality. However, reading between the lines, he is only able to find only a single phrase: EAT PEOPLE! Today, re-reading these novels still shocks and depresses me as I am trying to understand how the teachings of Confucius--a strong advocate of humanitarian values--has degenerated into an ethical and moral doctrine which only works toward suppressing humanity and strangling the life-force of youth.

In Confucius' era, Confucianism was only one of many schools of thought (the so-called hundred schools of thought) which were pervasive at the time and his teachings about government and morality, for most of his life, were not accepted by rulers. But during the Western Han dynasty, Confucianism became the only official ideology in serving the purpose of establishing a central autocratic government. Dong Zhong-shu (Tung Chung-shu) (177-104 B.C.) suggested that Confucianism should be respected exclusively, with the expulsion of other schools of thought. The emperor Han Wu Di readily accepted this suggestion. It signaled the beginning of Confucianism as the state cult (136 B.C.) of China. Dong further argued for the Three Standards as the unchanging way of Heaven. According to this doctrine, the emperor is the standard of the minister, the father of the son, and the husband of the wife, a doctrine which has

become the dogma of Confucian ethics. It firmly established the absolute authority of the ruler upon the ruled, the elder upon the young, and the patriarch upon women. Such hierarchical control of both the state and the family upon the individual has become one of the main sources of Chinese tragedy.

The relationships between the ruler and the ruled, the father and the son, the husband and wife, as Confucius envisions them, are indeed hierarchical, but he also vigorously urges that the ruler must love the ruled in order to exercise a government of benevolence (*ren*), and fathers should be affectionate to their sons. Thus these relationships have certain elements of mutual although not equal responsibility. But this tendency of mutuality and reciprocity was largely lost in Dong's interpretation and in the later development of Confucian doctrines in which unilateral obedience was increasingly emphasized. Since the North Song dynasty, the central autocratic system came into a highly developed and mature period. A highly politicized and metaphysical interpretation of Confucianism emerged from this period, called Neo-Confucianism. As Xu Yuanhe (1994) points out, the rise and fall of Neo-Confucianism has been parallel to the climax and the decay of the central autocratic system. It might not be an exaggeration to say that the degeneration of Confucianism into an ossified dogma used exclusively for official control has contributed to the fall of ancient China.

Though Confucius was himself not interested in metaphysical assumptions, when classical Confucian thought developed into Neo-Confucianism, a metaphysical foundation and a rational basis were established. As a master of Neo-Confucianism in South Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi) (1130-1200 A.D.) formulates Principle (*li*) as the foundation of everything, including truth and values. Principle exists in all things,

even before an object comes into existence: "In the beginning, when no single physical object yet existed, there was then nothing but Principle."²² Principle also constitutes human nature and is the source of moral virtues such as humaneness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), propriety (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*), faithfulness (*hsin*). Principle as the way of "above shapes" is transcendent and absolute, and determines *Ch'i* (energy)--the instrument of "within shapes"--whose movement makes up all things. The Supreme Ultimate (*T'ai-chi*) consists of the principles of all things in the universe and is immanent not only in the totality of the universe but also in every individual human being or individual thing.

The central concern of personal cultivation in Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism is to realize Principle and to live according to it. For Zhu Xi, the investigation of things and the exercise of reverence (*ching*) are necessary for personal cultivation. The goal of investigating things is to seek the principles of things in order to extend knowledge to the utmost because an exhaustive knowledge of the principles of external objects is the way to achieve an understanding of human nature and Heaven. The exercise of reverence refers to one's efforts to free oneself from distractions and keep the mind alert to concentrate on achieving Principle. When one is watchful over oneself in the pursuit of mind, the virtues of humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness become manifested in one's efforts. The moral nature of reverence is made clear here. These two aspects of personal cultivation are also intimately related to each other: the exercise of reverence provides a state of mental attitude under which the investigation of things can be effectively carried out. Only when one attends and regulates one's emotions and actions in accordance with harmony and equilibrium can

one's intellectual pursuit lead to the realization of Principle. In the meanwhile an effective investigation of things and extension of knowledge is a process of straightening one's inner control according to moral reason to achieve an understanding of the principles of things.

Underlying both the investigation of things and the exercise of reverence is the effort to "preserve heavenly Principle and extinguish human desires." The Doctrine of the Mean defines the state of mind as *equilibrium* before feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow or joy arise and as *harmony* after these feelings are aroused but act in their due degree and meet right occasions. Zhu Xi further defines emotions and feelings as manifestation of *ch'i*, and whenever emotions go to excess, they become the source of evil. Therefore, to realize heavenly Principle requires the control of emotions and feelings within the realm of harmony. As Lo (1993) argues, the dualism between heavenly Principle and human desires is not ontological since Zhu Xi admits that some natural human desires are of heavenly principle. Zhu Xi uses "human desires" interchangeably with "selfish desires" and "material desires," which indicate excessive or improper desires rather than all the desires the human being is born with. For example, the desire for food is of heavenly principle, but the desire for delicious food is of human desire. For Zhu Xi, human nature is originally clear, but human desires make it like a pearl immersed in impure water. To make it become lustrous again, human desires need to be under the control of moral reason. Thus, the ability to conquer self becomes essential to personal cultivation.

The process of investigating things is a process of dissolving human desires because the effort to go beyond concrete objects to realize their principles leads one to

understand the way of Heaven and to restore the human mind to its original goodness. This process involves arduous effort for a long time and the mind needs to concentrate on one thing after another thing to extend one's knowledge to the furthest point. Eventually, "there will be thorough comprehension of all the multitude of things, external or internal, fine or coarse, and every exercise of the mind will be marked by complete enlightenment."²³ Complementary to this process of externally harmonizing the mind with things is the exercise of reverence as an internal access to Principle or the Superior Ultimate. Reverence keeps human impulses and desires under control to achieve internal equilibrium and harmony of the mind. Regarding the relationship between self-conquest and extension of knowledge and exercise of reverence, Zhu Xi has a vivid analogy:

If we liken the "extension of knowledge," "inner mental attentiveness" [reverence] and "subduing the self," these three matters, to a house, "inner attentiveness [reverence]" corresponds to the man who guards the door, "subduing the self" corresponds to warding off the robber, and the "extension of knowledge" corresponds to investigating the external affairs that affect one's home.²⁴

The metaphor of reverence as a watchman who decides what can come inside the mind and self-conquest as resisting the evil vividly shows the importance of moral control in the process of personal cultivation. As Ching (1986) suggests, self-vigilance in the practice of reverence has some parallel to the technique of the self in Western confessional Christianity. What is different is that in the Chinese context there is no demand to detect and expose sin in order to follow the order of God for spiritual salvation since Confucianism holds a more positive attitude towards human nature and talks more about how to restore the original goodness of humanity. But in terms of exercising mental discipline and self-conquest, they are quite similar, and Principle

plays the somewhat similar role of God in guarding the mind against evil. Zhu Xi's ethics of self-conquest and self-sacrifice, when imposed upon women, intensified the subjugation of women to men, family, and patriarchal system. A gender analysis of Neo-Confucianism will be discussed later.

Zhu Xi's metaphysics of moral reason provides a suppressive basis for the feudal ethics and morality. The doctrine of "preserve heavenly Principle and extinguish human desire" is developed from Confucius' notion of subduing one's self and returning to propriety,²⁵ but it bases rational self-discipline upon a metaphysical Principle and extends it to the extreme, which can be easily turned into a tool for suppressive moral control. While a transcendental self located in universal scientific reason in modern Western thought plays a negative role in the full development of humanity, a relational self in Zhu Xi's metaphysics based upon universal moral reason is suppressive to the nurturing of individuality, and this suppression of individuality is shown even in a double sense. With its emphasis on extending the self through relationships and connections, Confucianism pays more attention to the commonality of humanity than to its differences. Going one step further, Zhu Xi subdues one's self within an all-encompassing Principle and privileges rational self-conquest in the process of personal cultivation. His distinction between Heavenly Principle and human desire and his privileging of knowledge obscure Confucius' more holistic notion of self and can too easily be turned against humanity itself. If it can be said that Confucius' notion of self in its expansive relationships starts with the self and is more open to its own emergence, Zhu Xi's notion of self dominated by moral reason is less dynamic and more suppressive. To some degree, Zhu Xi's thought obscures Confucius' notion of selfhood

as becoming, by its metaphysical formulation and emphasis upon rational self- control. Institutional usage and interpretation of Neo-Confucianism has intensified this theoretical tendency. To make it worse, more often than not, it was those who were in power who would define what was "Principle" and what was "human desires," which can not be held as Zhu Xi's responsibility. As a matter of fact, during his life Zhu Xi seldom gained any political power to influence the central government. But after his death, his philosophy was appropriated by the official ideology as a tool of control. Still, I would argue that Zhu Xi's theory, although more systematic than classical Confucianism, has a more suppressive power. To release the potential of the Confucian notion of a relational self in its unity with others and the universe, Zhu Xi's metaphysical foundation must be challenged. The effort to regenerate Confucianism cannot take flight into the metaphysical. As I have already argued, I see the potential in Confucianism not through constructing an alternative metaphysics of a relational self but through a critical reflection of what Confucianism can offer to our contextualized and localized contemporary life. Through a historical analysis of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, I believe it was the *metaphysical* elevation of an embodied and relational worldview that limited Confucianism's own potential. To regenerate Confucian tradition is not very promising without first interrogating "Heavenly principle." With this critical attitude in mind, I am going to discuss how the Confucian relational view of the self can converse with the Western subject.

Unity between the Universe and the Self, and Dichotomy of Subject and Object: An East-West Dialogue

Heaven is my father and earth is my mother and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in its midst. That which extends throughout the universe, I regard my body and that which directs the

universe, I regard as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters and all things are my companions.

(Zhang Zai, Western Inscription, quoted in Berry, 1988, p.14)

Unity between the *Tian* (heaven, universe, cosmos) and the *ren* (man, humanity, or self) is a common theme throughout Confucian literature, although different thinkers have different interpretations. The theme of oneness between Heaven and man particularly reaches its maturity and culmination in Neo-Confucian thought. In other words, unity between the universe and the self, as a way of both holistic thinking and self-transformative life, has finished its metaphysical conversion in Neo-Confucianism. While it offers insights for re-thinking the contemporary endangered relationship between humanity, nature, and cosmos, Neo-Confucianism's shaping in the metaphysics of moral reason through the absolute authority of Heavenly principle limits its potential to construct a creative web of relationships and connections. To break through the confinement of moral Principle infused by Heavenly destiny, so that the light can come through, let me start with Confucius again.

As scholars (Hall & Ames, 1987; Meng, 1997) notice, Confucius is not much concerned with the question of *tian* and seldom talks about it: "One cannot hear the Master [Confucius] talk on man's nature and the Tao of *tian*."²⁵ His attitudes towards *tian* are so unclear that contradictory interpretations can be drawn from The Analects.

His commitment to human experiences and his elusive comments on the issue of *tian*, on the other hand, are complementary to his implicit understanding of the inner relation between *tian* and humanity. He argues that "at fifty I realized the *ming* (Mandate, Fate or Destiny) of *tian*" and insists that "a person who does not understand *ming* has no way of becoming a *junzi* (nobleman, superior man, or exemplary person)."²⁶ In The

Analects, *tian* is sometimes described as the creator of sages, sometimes as the provider of health, status, and wealth, sometimes as a superior power bestowing the task of becoming a nobleman, and sometimes as a source of all phenomena and natural processes of change. Obviously *tian* is not a pre-determined order or a transcendental principle completely independent of humanity. This continuum of universe and humanity leads to Mencius' (372-289 B.C.) dictum about understanding *tian* by understanding *xing* (human natural tendency), which indicates the formation of the ancient notion about the unity between universe and humanity. Here, *tian* represents the cosmos through *Tao* or Way, and *xing* refers to humanity while *ming* connects *tian* and humanity. What is implied in this holistic way of thinking about the self and the universe is that the *Tao* of the cosmos is implicit in humanity and the Way of being a human can be achieved by understanding the universe. The distinction between the self and external objects becomes vague and permeable, a distinction which characterizes ancient Chinese thought and differs from the Western subject/object dichotomy. Furthermore, Confucius believes that the *ming* of *Tian* is only possible for those who have already achieved the quality of *de* (virtues, morality), which gives the *Tao* a certain sense of morality. In other words, the *Tao* of cosmos is imbued with moral values and meanings of humanity, a fact which makes the distinction between the knowing subject and the objectified external world even more impossible.

What is more important is to understand *ming*, *Tao* and *xing* as changeable, transformative, and creative in classical Confucianism, as Hall and Ames (1987) argue. Hall and Ames criticize both Tu Wei-ming and Mou Zongsan as imposing Western transcendental concepts upon the early Chinese traditions. I have similar doubts

concerning Tu's reconstruction of Confucian metaphysics as an alternative to Western individualism. Early Confucian thoughts about an interactive and holistic understanding of the relation between the *Tao* of the universe and the *xing* of humanity do not assume an absolute, independent, and superior principle above human experiences to provide transcendental guidance for human action. This happened much later in the Cheng-Zhu branch (1033-1200 A.D.) of Neo-Confucianism which is still different from Western metaphysics. The interplay Confucius sees between humanity and environment bestows *Tao* with transformative and creative potential. *Tao* is not an externally imposed absolute standard, but emerges out of the interaction between humanity and environment and is a result of human experiences and activities. Confucius says, "It is the human being who is able to extend *Tao*, not *Tao* that is able to extend the human being."²⁷ Here Confucius emphasizes the active and creative role of humanity in not only keeping *Tao* but also transforming and broadening *Tao*. In criticisms of Confucianism, more often than not it is this transformative potential of *Tao* that is ignored. Human participation in *Tao* rather than blind obedience to pre-determined law or truth, is the key to the unity between the universe and humanity. In a similar manner, *ming* is not predetermined and *xing* is not something unchangeable either. That is one of the reasons that education and personal cultivation play such an important role in the Confucian self. Since Confucians not only follow *Tao* but are also actively engaged in co-creating *Tao* with *tian*, the union between the universe and the self becomes much more dynamic, interactive, and transformative than we usually believe. In this sense, to approach the Confucian self merely as "on the path" to self-realization can only capture part of the picture. The creative, interactive, and

transformative potential of becoming a Confucian nobleman is another intertwined aspect of the process that cannot be neglected. The Confucian self is simultaneously preservative and creative.

While Confucius' thoughts about *tian* are more implicit, Mencius clearly brings forth the notion of unity between *tian* and man. He says, "Knowing his nature, he knows *tian*."²⁸ *Tao* of *tian* is inherent in human nature, and realizing it depends upon the realization of human *xing*. As a result, self-transformation is a process of internal change through interaction with the external rather than transcendence achieved from the internal unto an external or religious sense of another world. For Mencius, heaven, earth, and all kinds of phenomena and objects are all unified with man, whose nature is basically good. Good human nature coming from *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi* is endowed by heaven, and understanding human *xing* is intertwined with understanding heavenly *Tao*. "All things are already in the self. There is no greater delight than realizing one's own sincerity on self-examination."²⁹ To define human nature in this way, Mencius is more essentialized than Confucius because Confucius does not define human nature as good or bad. Consistent with Confucius, though, Mencius believes in the internal nature of realizing both human *xing* and heavenly *Tao*. The trinity between heaven, earth, and humanity, an ancient theme that existed much earlier than Confucius, is unique to the Chinese worldview. Both Confucians and Taoists interpret it in their own ways. Taoists regards *Tao* as more natural and cosmological, not ontologically related to the human; Confucians regards *Tao* as more moral and imbued with human virtues. The moral quality of *Tao* is obvious in Mencius' notion. Moreover, different from Confucius' emphasis on the interplay between humanity and environment, Mencius

starts with the goodness of human nature to show heavenly *Tao*, which shows a more humanistic orientation. Paradoxically, such an elevation of man turns out, especially in the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, to result in morality as Heaven to suppress humanity. I am going to trace this evolution briefly.

When Confucianism became the official ideology in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), Dong Zhong-shu believed that Heaven is the creator of everything and the Three Standards--notorious as hierarchical ethics--are Heavenly principles for everyone to follow. Here the intention of (moral) Heaven controlling humanity becomes very explicit. Furthermore, Confucius' transformative *Tao* disappears in his argument for an unchangeable Heaven and Way. The generative potential of Confucius' interactive view about *tian Tao* and humanity is already lost in this institutionalization of Confucianism.

The tendency of Heavenly *Tao* to suppress human nature was particularly developed in Neo-Confucianism through its moral metaphysics. Since the Song Dynasty, as a response to the challenge of Taoism and Buddhism, a new interpretation of Confucianism based upon morality and ethics has been developed. It is called Neo-Confucianism and includes both branches, focusing on Principle (*li*) and focusing on Heart (*xin*). In this dissertation when I talk about Neo-Confucianism, I mainly refer to the Neo-Confucian theory of Principle culminating in Cheng and particularly in Zhu.

Cheng Yichuan (1033-1108 A.D.) founded the fundamental role of Principle that is the source of everything in the cosmos. Principle comes from Heaven and is dominated by moral norms. Cheng Yichuan believes that moral Principle is endowed by Heavenly *ming* and that the relation between Heaven and man is based upon

Principle that is also *xing* and *ming*. To become unified with Principle is the way to achieve union between Heaven and man. The moral nature of unity between Heaven and man and the metaphysical sense of Principle become obvious here.

As the master of the Principle branch of Neo-Confucianism, Zhu Xi developed Cheng's perspectives into a more systematic and mature theory. He interprets Principle as metaphysical *Tao* that is the sum of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. Man comes from the integration of Principle and *ch'i*, human nature (*xing*) is from Principle, and moral consciousness in human nature comes from heavenly Principle, which is the source of heaven, earth, and every thing. To become unified with Principle--the key to the unity between Heaven and man--one must start with subduing human desires since circulation of *ch'i*, if covered by human desires, results in evil. To embody heavenly Principle within concrete persons through metaphysical moral reason more often than not constrains a person's creative potential to transform both the self and the worlds. Confucius' conscious refusal of metaphysics is finally reversed in Zhu Xi's theory of Principle. Confucius' concern over personal experiential transformation is replaced, as I have argued before, by Zhu Xi's focus on the role of the rational control of human desires/humanity.

As de Bary (1991) argues, Confucian personalism, when developed into the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian school, is more close to Western individualism, although at the same time "what Chu Hsi seeks is a self-realization in which man fulfills all that is distinctively human while participating in the creative work of heaven and earth" (p. 9). The sense of expanding the self into a cosmological network in order to return to the self more deeply is essential to the notion of unity between the universe and the self.

However, it is indeed this closeness between Zhu Xi's self-realization and Western individualism in the sense of metaphysical assumptions that bothers me. This parallel between the Western scientific reason/self and the Neo-Confucian moral reason/self is something we need to reflect upon critically in order that a more holistic, experiential, and generative sense of the Confucian self--not loaded by moral metaphysics--can come forward.

According to Zhang Shiyong (1997), traditional Chinese philosophy and modern Western philosophy follow two different lines regarding the relationship between human beings and the world: Oneness of Heaven and man versus the subject-object dichotomy. He further argues that the lack of the principle of subjectivity in Chinese traditions leads to the suppression of humanity by Heaven while the Western absolute self mystifies an abstract, independent, yet decontextualized Self, leading to an empty and dry generalization separate from an individual's concrete life. He believes that the post-modern turn in the West is not applicable to the Chinese situation regarding the breakdown of the subject and object dichotomy. For him, a more creative, dynamic sense of unity must first be based upon the separation between subject and object. Quite contrary to his claims, Meng Peiyuan (1997) believes that the traditional Chinese way of thinking has its own subjective principle situated in the network of humanity and nature, subject and object unified instead of dichotomized. It is not an objective epistemology, but a subjective axiology. Chinese philosophy is about humanity and life, and the self is the location for an individual to pursue human spiritual existence and understand the universe, which characterizes thinking as reflective, experiential, holistic, and spiritual. To regard world, nature, or self as an object of knowing is absent

in Chinese subjective traditions. The focus on the self and the philosophical and spiritual elaboration on self-improvement, however, shows a different orientation from the subject-object dichotomy, which is another form of subjectivity. Meng furthers his argument by establishing a metaphysics for Chinese subjective thinking. Actually the different attitudes regarding the issue of subject and object are not only philosophical and cultural, but also linguistic. Interestingly, Kristeva (1989) suggests that Chinese, as an ideograph language, blurs the separate sense of subject and object, a suggestion which I will discuss in the next chapter when dealing with the relationship between self and language.

The different approaches Zhang and Meng take to thinking about the issue of unity between the universe and the self and subject-object dichotomy call for serious thinking. The term Zhang uses, "oneness between Heaven and man," already implies his critique towards this sense of oneness. While I also take a critical lens, I doubt whether Chinese thoughts must go through the Western subject-object split before reaching another level of maturity as he suggests. Since the path of the subject/object dichotomy is already blocked, can we not go around finding another road? While his vigilance against a conservative return to traditions is admirable, I do not think it can be constructive to take up the other path without seriously thinking about a possible "third" space. Meng's effort to regenerate the principle of subjectivity within the Chinese tradition would be more meaningful if he did not rely upon building another type of metaphysics or if he could be more critical towards a metaphysical framework. I agree that subjectivity should not be exclusively defined by Western modern philosophy and I do see a principle of subjectivity in Confucian traditions (de Bary, 1991). However,

Meng cannot address the issue of how the traditional Chinese mode of thinking does not lead to in-depth scientific explorations and understandings. Even in the realm of humanity, Chinese holistic ideals could lead to suffocation without serious critical elaboration. My own experiences of crisis as I walked into the "West" have urged me to look for the so-called "third" space, especially if self and other stay at the level of idealization. The moment of feeling the union between self and world was also the moment of the dissolution of the self for me. My wandering into a knowing and adventural subject mainly defined by the Western ideal was also a failure. Only when I could situate myself on the boundary, at the border, and at the edge of the double and the multiple, was I able to engage in the constructive process of becoming myself without being trapped in dead-ends. To imagine beyond dead-ends, a shift in the angle of seeing becomes crucial.

Needless to say, it is simplistic to define Chinese thinking as holistic and Western thinking as dualistic. Actually, historically, there are always some important non-mainstream thinkers who hold their different opinions from traditional mode of thinking on the both sides of the ocean. Still different orientations regarding the relationship between the self and the external world, subject and object in Chinese and Western philosophies is not that difficult to trace. Even Foucault, as a rebel against modern Western traditions, does not directly challenge the duality originating from the Greco-Roman traditions and subsequently a priority of self over other. He is still a very Western man to me. Again, I am more interested in asking the question: Is there a third way? Can we keep a certain distance between subject and object without dichotomizing them in order to be able to have an in-depth understanding of nature, the world and the

self? Without this distance, the fusion between the self and an external world cannot lead to respect for differences and a deep understanding of both self and world.

Understanding nature is different from understanding humanity. The interaction between the two is important, but there is no interaction if the two are unified. The cosmological principle is not human nature although the two are intertwined and cannot be really separated. To situate the self in communal, ecological, and cosmological networks is an ancient, yet contemporary, call, but to answer this call in our time we must first understand how this network is so fractaled, complex, multilayered, and sometimes entangled that the self must take the responsibility to weave the web. Unity with/in the web must be dynamic, transformative, and creative. On the other hand, when the distance between subject and object is elevated to the level of dualism, objectifying control of the subject not only brings disasters not only to the other/object but also turns the subject itself into the object of this control. The contemporary ecological movement (Berry, 1990) has shown that not only is this dualism destructive to both the natural environment and human society, but the objectification of the other unconsciously turns this violence back onto the self (Pinar, 2001). Derrida's deconstruction of dualism, including subject/object dualism, indicates that hierarchical violence is inherent in such dualism. Here comes another question: How can the violence of dualism be resisted without abolishing the conceptual distinction between subject and object? Perhaps one way is to make the relationship between subject and object much more fluid, interchangeable, and transformative. In transforming the hero of the novel into the position of the subject, giving the hero more freedom to emerge and become, Bakhtin points out a way in which the self treats the other also as subject.

In such a dynamic relationship, self/subject, other, and universe co-emerge and co-create, which echoes Confucius' transformative *Tao*. The co-creative subject/object relation I am searching for, however, is based on differentiation instead of non-differentiation between subject and object. What is important here is to build connections and relationships in such a way that the creativity of both can be promoted.

To look back upon Foucault's notion of self-creation, it is not difficult to discern its trace of duality, if not dualism, regarding the relationship between subject and object. His ontological priority of the self over others also implies a sharp distinction between the two. As a strong critic of the modern subject in its domination over Other, his return to the issue of the subject more or less still has a certain residue of individualism. Although not in the sense of abstract individualism suppressing a concrete existence of individuality, the destabilized Foucaultian subject still takes both the self and the world more as an object of elaboration and reconstruction than in a relationship of co-creation. As I have argued in Chapter 3, in the Greco-Roman tradition, duality between subject and object, mind and body, reason and emotion has already emerged. When Foucault tries to regenerate the care of the self from this tradition, he does not substantially critique this duality but goes directly into his own project of self-creation which incorporates body and emotion as modes of creating new subjectivity. In his own aesthetics of self-care, he constantly talks about how the subject regards its own formation as an object of ethical elaboration and artistic creation. Using the language of subject/object to think about the self-relationship, Foucault fails to encounter the violence which might exist in this dualism. In Greek and Roman society, Foucault makes it clear, women, boys and slaves are objects to be

manipulated and controlled, which makes the use of the same language to describe self-formation and self-creation problematic. Without the resort to the subject/object relation, can the self be engaged in activities of self-examination, self-reflection, and self-transformation? I believe Chinese tradition shows that it can be done in a more holistic way based on a co-emergent self/other relationship. The co-emergence and co-creation of the self and the world challenge the sharp distinction between self and other, subject and object. On the other hand, though, just as Julia Kristeva (1976) is suspicious about whether the Oedipal scheme fits into Chinese society but still cannot avoid using psychoanalytic terms to describe and understand Chinese people, Foucault cannot escape his own philosophical traditions to create a completely new vocabulary.

Common to the Foucaultian notion of self-creation and the Confucian notion of personal cultivation is the concept of selfhood as becoming. By contrast to the Western modern rationalist self that contains a transcendental truth, the Foucaultian self and the Confucian self are both engaged in a constructive process of cultivating one's dispositions, virtues, and behaviors to transform oneself toward the full realization and re-creation of humanity. Moreover, the Foucaultian self and the Confucian self share a view of humanity in which the dichotomy between mind and body is challenged. For Confucius, the self is located in the unity between one's inner faculty and external performances, in the unity between knowledge and action, in the unity between intellect and emotions, and in the unity between mind and body. For Foucault, the body is also the site for constructing subjectivity and inventing new modes of life. In this emergent conception of the self, selfhood becomes a life-long project that is always yet to be achieved, unfolding a process of continuous transformation and becoming.

Though they share certain similarities, the Foucaultian subject and the Confucian self have very different foci: the former emphasizes the individuality of the self and the creative transformation of traditions, while the latter emphasizes social relationships and respect for traditions. Foucault adopts a critical stance towards traditions (while acknowledging how the self is situated in traditions) and makes rupture with the past and traditions necessary for self-creation. For Foucault, what is excluded and suppressed must be exposed and incorporated to extend the boundary of human possibilities, and historical-social-political limitations must be challenged in order to generate new modes of life. The Foucaultian project of selfhood focuses more on discontinuity, rupture, resistance, and fragmentation. The Confucian self is much more unitary and focuses more on continuity and consistency. Although as de Bary (1991), and as Hall and Ames (1987) suggest, Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism underline one's unique contribution to the advancement of the Way and one's creative implementation of traditions, by and large, what is lacking in Confucianism is a critical attitude toward cultural norms and traditions upon which new layers of the self can be created. The emphasis upon social relationships when combined with a hierarchical system can only result in the suppression of creativity. Such a different focus also reflects different orientations regarding the principle of subjectivity and the relationship between self and other.

In Foucaultian aesthetics, although the care of the self implies a proper relationship between self and others, the emphasis is on the priority of the care of the self and is still embedded within a Western framework that stresses individuality. A Western sense of an independent self in contrast with others does not exist in

Confucianism, and individuality is always embedded within social and cultural networks. In contemporary China, there has appeared a renewed search for the individual self as a counteraction to a long history of collectivism. However, this search is sometimes reflected in the image of an individual male hero (Lu, 1993) striving for his freedom in contemporary "vanguard" literature. This movement toward Western individualism forms a conspiracy with the influx of capitalism and leads to the erosion of communal values. To be engaged in a dialogue with the West in a creative way, it becomes necessary to reclaim the Confucian value of relationality while at the same time searching for new ways of promoting individuality. Therefore, to negotiate a dialogue between the Foucaultian subject and the Confucian self, I believe that we need to generate a new sense of relational individuality situated in dynamic and complex cultural connections, social interactions and cosmic processes, so that individuality can be transformed into a fuller and deeper sense of self. In this way, selfhood is constantly created and recreated in richer and more open interconnections in which individuality can be expressed, supported and transformed. The more profound one's participation in dialogic interactions across differences with others and with the world, the more deeply and creatively one's own individuality evolves. The more unique and particular each individual's contribution to the whole, the more complex and generative the web of relationships and connections that can emerge. Through this dynamic interaction between individuality and relationality, the creative potential of the self is constantly called into existence. This new sense of the self also calls upon a new sense of community that is more open to differences and supportive of personal creation. The web of connections and relationships brings out an interactive wholeness both in

harmony and in tension, and creativity comes out of the interplay between unmerged union and constructive dissipation in a shifting intersubjective space. As a result, the strong principle of subjectivity is not separate from the world and is constantly regenerated through the creative social, historical, and cosmic network in which the self is situated.

**Gender Analysis of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism:
Do Women Have More Space in a Relational Self?**

Against all shackles and fetters, the Chinese woman has exerted herself
and achieved for herself a place in the family, in society, and in history.
(Hu Shih, 1992/1931, p. 15)

In Western feminist critiques, the autonomous and isolated male ego is one of the targets. As I point out in Chapter 2, feminists are concerned with how to construct a relational self as an alternative to the male heroic self. Due to this concern, some feminist critics turn to the East for other possibilities including Confucianism (Li, 2000). I am deeply skeptical, however, about efforts to search for a common ground for Confucian and feminist ethics such as those of Li Chenyang (2000). While the complexity of the link between Confucianism and the oppression of women in China needs to be explored, I do not think the relational and holistic nature of Confucian self, though compatible with the Western feminist critique of reason, can excuse Confucian patriarchal implications. I do agree that it is not well grounded to quickly condemn Confucianism as purely patriarchal without an historical investigations into the role Confucianism played in Chinese women's lives. On the other hand, though, using Western feminist concerns to analyze the gendered nature of Confucianism is, to some degree, a decontextualized attempt. If reason versus emotion is one of the major tools in excluding women in the Western culture, the lack of reason in classical Confucianism

by no means implies the lack of patriarchal thinking that can come from different sources. Furthermore, I have tried to point out that in Neo-Confucianism, especially the Cheng-Zhu school, moral reason plays a very suppressive role in the project of personal cultivation and especially contributes to the more subjugation of women.

In general, the effort to recover Confucian traditions in a way compatible with feminist projects is outweighed by the almost consensual criticism of Confucianism as highly patriarchal. While attempting to understand sexism with Chinese characteristics, Hall and Ames (2000) point out that "one familiar pattern in the literature which reports on gender in China has been to equate traditional Chinese culture with Confucianism, and then to condemn Confucianism because of its unrelenting patriarchy. . . . Neither traditional Chinese culture nor Confucianism reduce to footbinding" (p. 91). In contrast to Western sexism, which is inherent in its dualism, Hall and Ames suggests that Chinese sexism be understood through a correlative model which is more fluid and less stable than the dualistic one, but on the other hand can bring a greater degree of suppression under a hierarchical system. In other words, a relational self through correlation instead of dualism can produce a harsh hierarchy in which women, at its worst are simply not treated as persons. The evolution of the Chinese patriarchy is too complicated for me to explore here, but I am going to trace how Confucianism developed into a rigid dogma wherein women have had a smaller and smaller space to breathe and live.

"Of all people, women and inferior men are the most difficult to deal with. If you are close to them, they lose their humility. If you are distant from them, they are discontented."³⁰ Confucius' remark in The Analects is often charged with being an

expression of the Master's sexism. While Paul Goldin (2000) attempts to argue that Confucius does not mean women are "incapable of moral self-cultivation" (p. 140) and that cultivated women are no lower than cultivated men, there is not much doubt that women's moral cultivation, if it exists, mainly intends to teach them "suitable" virtues--suitable to maintain a system in which men are in charge intellectually and morally. I believe that classical Confucianism, from Confucius, has planted its patriarchal seed. However, the ambiguity and contradictions of classical Confucianism regarding the distinction between "inner" and "outer," as Goldin argues, do point out the complexity of Confucian discourses on women, men, and politics. Actually quite contrary to common belief, numerous ancient Chinese women acted as diplomats, politician, and generals without going against Confucian ethics. This shows a certain flexibility to allow outstanding women to go into the outer world. Furthermore, the uniqueness of the Confucian self in its expansive relationships with society and the universe, and the central position of the family in personal cultivation make the distinction between the inner and the outer permeable. Morality, ethics, and politics flow from the inner to the outer, which makes women's positions in family important for promoting good education and personal cultivation. Occasionally women's stepping outside of the family is acceptable to Confucians and there is no objection to women's participation in their husbands' public work. I also agree with Goldin that the later manifestations of sexism and misogyny in imperial times set up much harsher and stricter in setting up standards of obedience for women to follow. Lin (1992/1936) refers to Neo-Confucian ethics for women as "paritanico-sadistic" (p. 36), which loses the humanistic and tolerant orientation of Confucius.

As I have already mentioned, in the Han Dynasty, the State Confucianism emphasizes more social order along with the increased government centralization. Dong's three standards put women into a position of blind obedience and miserable submission to men. Tales of how women can corrupt men's hearts by their special power and charm began to flourish. As a response to (the myth) of destructive feminine power, much more restrictive control was imposed upon women. Interestingly, even during this period of the State Confucianism, women were still allowed a certain flexibility. The so-called Confucian model wife (Peterson, 2000), Meng Guang, declined her father's arrangement of marriage to select her own husband, Liang Hong, and went through all kinds of hardships together with him. She set up a model of harmonious, respectful relation between husband and wife. Another fascinating female figure during the period is Ban Chao (49-120 A.D.), the first female historian of China. She not only completed her History of the Han Dynasty, but also created a new style of writing history, biography, which was adopted by subsequent dynasties. Her Instructions for Women argues for equality of education for women and men, and *yin/yang* complementary relationships between wife and husband, but from the perspective of Confucian orthodoxy. As a controversial figure for feminists, I believe Ban Chao nevertheless went beyond her historical limitations to expand the boundary into new realms. At the same time, it also shows the inner ambivalent views of women in the early Confucian tradition, as Wawrytko (2000) argues. Women's virtues, once in a while, can lead women into their own intellectual, political, ethical, artistic creation when virtues are re-appropriated and re-interpreted beyond sexism.

Women's freedom, if there was any, was largely limited, starting from the Song Dynasty in which Neo-Confucianism had begun to be formulated. Following Mencius' principle of "differentiation between Husband and Wife," Zhu Xi strengthened and developed the unequal gender roles in the classical teachings. For him, women do not have the intellectual ability to understand the metaphysical Principle that men should pursue and promote, and women's activities should be confined to the home. According to Zhu Xi, such a differentiation is the basis for proper relationships with children, practicing filial piety, pursuing righteousness, and performing rites. Quoting another Neo-Confucian, Cheng Yichuan (1033 -1107 A.D.), Zhu Xi reiterated the inferior status of women:

Between man and woman, there is an order of superiority and inferiority, and between husband and wife, there is the principle of who leads and who follows. This is a constant principle. If people are influenced by feelings, give free rein to desires, and act because of pleasure, a man will be driven by desires and lose his character of strength, and a woman will be accustomed to pleasure and forget her duty of obedience. Consequently, there will be misfortune and neither will be benefited.³¹

By basing women's subordination upon the metaphysical principle and the privilege of rational control over human emotions, Zhu Xi further revived and ossified the ethics of women's obedience. According to Birge's (1989) studies of Zhu Xi's writings for funerary inscriptions of women, Zhu Xi's ideal of womanhood includes serving her parents-in-law diligently without any complaints, following her husband's orders, keeping harmony among family members, taking good care of the household in a frugal way, and educating her children for their moral cultivation. There is no place left for herself: Women are supposed to sacrifice and devote themselves to others and the family. The feminine virtue Zhu Xi praises the most is the endurance of hardships,

difficulties, physical sacrifice, and even death to serve the Confucian ethics. While it is hardly a demand only for women, since it is also for any man who wants to become a good Confucian, the sense of self-sacrifice and even self-mutilation is much more obvious for women. Prior to Zhu Xi's time, it was not uncommon for widows or divorced women to remarry. But Zhu Xi made chastity and absolute loyalty to one man an important virtue of a woman and, as a result, re-marriage was losing one's virtue.

Footbinding began to gain its popularity in the Song Dynasty. From a psychoanalytic view, Julia Kristeva (1977) believes that footbinding could be an act of relieving fear and anxiety over female power. The fear of woman's seductive power was incorporated to popular culture beginning with the Han Dynasty and the anxiety over maternal reproductive power was more ancient. To keep males in control and make females less threatening, women could be kept away from the public by confining their bodies and their spaces to move. Although it is hard to tell the relationship between this inhumanity against women and the Neo-Confucian ethics, the morality Neo-Confucianism advocates undoubtedly contributed to this cruelty. According to Howard Levy (1966), Zhu Xi is recorded to have introduced footbinding into the Southern part of China out of the motivation to promote women's chastity and teach the separation of men and women. Zhu Xi's moral prohibition against the remarriage of widows condemned women's status to that of property of men. The suicide of women following their husbands' deaths, strangely, became the high point of women's loyalty and chastity. This cult of widow fidelity reached its peak in a later dynasty: Ming (1368-1644 A.D.). Here Lu Xun's depiction of Chinese ethics as eating people became more precisely the eating of women. I am aware that "placing the blame on Neo-

Confucianism has been a convenient way for modern writers to condemn patriarchy in China without condemning Chinese culture as a whole" as Ebrey points out (1993, p. 6); However, I still believe that the development of Chinese metaphysics in Neo-Confucianism did make women's situation much worse.

Even during this reactionary period, there were women who went beyond the Confucian line to create their own womanhood. Li Qingzhao (1083-1151) as a well-known poet, writer, musician, and painter, invented her own style of writing to bring woman's body and soul into *ci* poetry. Her style of *ci* was called by her literary name in the history of Chinese literature. Liang Hongyu (1100-1135), escaping from "foot binding as well as the institution of concubinage" (Peterson, 2000, p.273), was a general and a national heroine who fought against the invasion of Jin with marvelous bravery and brilliant tact. Both women were well known for their equal and affectionate relationships with their husbands. The admiration for these exceptional women cannot show a fuller picture of womanhood without an understanding of how ordinary mothers, wives, and daughters expanded their horizons of life through seeking certain spaces within the Confucian traditions. As Ebrey (1993) argues, scholars of women's history tended to focus more on outstanding women who gained power in a male-dominated world such as in political, military, diplomatic, or literary realms but neglected the everyday lives of ordinary women. Such is, actually, I would argue, consistent with the traditional way of searching for historical individual heroes, a way which needs to be deconstructed. The acknowledgement and recovering of our heroines must be coupled with the more difficult work of understanding ordinary women's lives in their own fluidity, complexity, and ambiguity. Ebrey's (1993) remarkable and scholarly effort to

explore how ordinary women, not as victims but as capable persons who managed to accomplish much in the Song Dynasty--a period during which women's status declined --challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions about women, especially Chinese women. As another note, ancient Chinese women who belonged to the lowest class created women's script. It is a recent discovery and we are not clear about its origin. A new language, different from "men's" language, was created by ordinary women.

As Ebrey (1993) points out, motherhood is a very important part of ancient Chinese women's identity. Without essentializing and idealizing motherhood, Chinese women did act as teachers to nurture and cultivate the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic abilities of their children. More often than not, motherhood became an effective realm for women to expand Confucian traditions, creating more room to challenge hierarchy. In ancient China there were many touching stories about how mothers influenced their sons to become great people with lofty ideals by personal examples and verbal instructions. I will give two examples of model mothers whose sons are the masters of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. Mother Meng (ca. 400-350 B.C.) not only taught her son, Mencius, the virtues of scholarly persistence, keeping promises, and maintaining one's commitment, but she also criticized him for not giving his wife the right to act at ease with herself when alone. As a result of her teaching, the couple's marriage was saved. Mother Meng's teaching about Confucian virtues in a flexible and non-conventional way was quite original at the time in terms of the relationships between husband and wife. One of the founders of Neo-Confucianism, Cheng Yichuan, praised his mother, Miss Hou (1004-1052) for her education. In his reflection, he mentioned how Miss Hou treated the servant, the orphan, the poor, and the sick in a

caring way and urged her children to do the same (Ebrey, 1993). In a highly hierarchical society, such a respect for people of inferior status was beyond her time, although ironically Neo-Confucianism is known for intensifying hierarchy. Actually Cheng Yichuan re-appropriated his mother's concern over people in unfavorable conditions as feminine devotion to others rather than as a call for equality. How I wish these Confucian masters had been more loyal to their mothers' teaching to loosen the grip of Confucianism over women! It is also worth mentioning that literate mothers in ancient China usually taught their daughters poetry, calligraphy and ritual in addition to women's domestic work.

My own mother is also a very important teacher in my life. Her exemplary teaching has influenced me to cultivate my own sense of living an upright and meaningful life. An outstanding professor herself, well loved by her students, she is the only person who dares to confront the President of a provincial educational college and argue against his decisions. She never hesitates to struggle for her own rights in spite of whatever the official language is. My family's move from a 13 square metre room containing 7 family members to a more spacious apartment in the 1980s was made possible by my mother who physically stood in front of the car of the person who was in charge of public apartment arrangement asking for a fair treatment. I also vividly remember how she, with a very small body, arguing forcefully with a businessman with a huge figure who cheated people from the countryside, to return the money to those people. Her courage, her distaste for various kinds of hierarchy, and her laughing spirit are always an inspiration to me. Her caring attitudes towards and devotion to others, and her ability to relate to different people regardless of their social status often amaze

me: Her sense of social justice is intricately connected to her embodiment of a relational self. Her faith in my intellectual ability supported me through Chinese schooling with its many gender biases. When I was upset about my elementary teacher's remark about my "not being smart," mother said, "Do not listen to her. Mama is a teacher too. You may not respond quickly, but you can reach the depth that others cannot reach after thinking through with your persistence, patience, and intelligence. Different style of thinking. That is all." This respect for my own mode of understanding has traveled with me into worlds beyond what I could imagine. Although the shadow of not being "smart" often casts certain self-doubts, the determination to hold on to my own path leads me to go through darkness and hardships to reach new shores. Confucius' principle of teaching according to the personal quality of students is well embodied in my mother's mentoring of me.

Strongly influenced by my mother's faith in women's capacities, growing up in a period that officially claimed that women and men are equal, I have been on a long road to realize the gendered nature of reality and my own life. Traveling along a highly competitive academic road, I worked with my male counterparts without bothering to think about my gendered identity. But when I chose education as my career, my mother was bitterly disappointed. She must have known that I chose a road full of ambiguities, paradoxes, and traps for a woman, and was quite reluctant to let her own daughter follow a common path that women have traditionally taken. However, at the time, with inexperienced naivete and youthful passion, I thought that as a teacher I could teach love and help create a better and more caring world. I truly believed the tenet of "to give is happier than to take" without questioning its cultural flavor of self-sacrifice.

Neither could I be conscious of its gendered nature. Nor did I know that Zhu Xi, a master of patriarchal ethics, clearly stated that the highest human virtue of a woman is her ability to love, while she doesn't have any intellectual potential. Even in contemporary China, the image of teacher--a women's profession--as a candle that fires itself in order to lighten the lives of others is a common metaphor. Such an ethic of self-sacrifice in the educational profession, in conflict with my own desire to claim the self, has brought me moments of crisis and periods of turbulence without much consciousness about how gendered these conflicts are. Sometimes the voices of a caring girl who opened sympathetic eyes to the world around her whispered to my academic self: What are you doing here in the ivory tower of scholarship without making much meaningful sense of your life? Can you be devoted to children with your theoretical abstraction? Other times my intellectual self fought back: Why should I be immersed in the everyday practice of schooling and be lost in meeting the demands of others? Cannot women become theorists and contribute to new visions of education? Perhaps the question can be put in other words: Can a relational self be reclaimed with more room for women not only to create new versions of womanhood but also to transform the world? Now looking back on the journey I have taken with its ups and downs, I realize how subtly and unconsciously cultural traditions can shape one's identity, and the quest for the self for a woman is indeed a complicated and ambiguous journey.

Through my analysis of the patriarchal nature of Confucianism and especially Neo-Confucianism, I have attempted to show that a relational self, as an alternative to the Western autonomous self, is not necessarily compatible with feminist projects

unless we first deal with the problematic of the relational. In the Chinese relational self, woman is not Other in the Western sense of an objectified stranger, but is an inferior who does not have equal intellectual capacity to cultivate herself, and a stranger who holds mystifying power which must be under the control of man. In this sense, Chinese women are also a "second sex," again more in superior-inferior correlation rather than in subject-object dichotomy. Ancient literate Chinese women (and sometimes artistic prostitutes), though, did get special respect from their male counterparts in the field of literati. There was always a certain fluidity within the Chinese society that shows the paradoxes and contradictions regarding the issue of wo/man, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Chinese sexism points out, on the other hand, that the link between women and an ecological sense of the cosmos, or the connection between women and relational understanding of the world is contextual. The ecology of the Confucian self, however relational and cosmic it is, does not really offer women enough space to express and create themselves. The Confucian self does ask Westerners to rethink the issue of identity beyond the dichotomy of subject/object and self/other, but its own patriarchal and hierarchical nature must be challenged in reclaiming it as a living tradition for the contemporary age.

Interestingly, female public figures, mother models, and the ordinary women in China I have mentioned, in their play with Confucian traditions to either expand them or go beyond them, had attempted building a room of their own (Woolf, 1929) within the "patriarchal wilderness" (Pagano, 1990). Their efforts to either challenge hierarchy itself or imbue their own womanhood with literary creation tell me that it may be to be relational and creative at the same time. My mother's devotion to others while keeping

her own sense of self also encourages me to engage in a communal journey of "creating spaces and finding voices" (Miller, 1990). Whether in China or in the West, women are still strangers in society and though situated in different cultural contexts, encounter similar questions: Can we reclaim our womanhood without sacrificing a relational and ecological sense of self, reality and life? Can we shape the world differently by releasing the power of femininity that is also in the process of creation and re-creation? Can we imagine new visions of humanity and cosmology through listening to the call of the stranger that is woman? My cross-cultural inquiry of the self, without feeling satisfied with either male version of the self, takes me to Julia Kristeva for an in-depth analysis of woman's strangeness, woman's creativity, and woman's self. Now let us turn to listen carefully to ourselves through Julia Kristeva.

Notes

1. The Great Learning, 1. There are four Confucian classics, The Analects, Mencius, The Great Learning, and The Doctrine of the Mean, which are called the four books.
2. I prefer to use the term "personal cultivation" rather than "self-cultivation" because the former reflects the Confucian sense of the self better.
3. The Analects, 8.7.
4. *Ibid.*, 9.16.
5. The Great Learning, 3.
6. Mencius, 3.2.
7. The Analects, 2.4.
8. The Analects, 15.39.
9. *Ibid.*, 11.22.
10. The Great Learning, 1.

11. The Analects, 1.4.
12. *Ibid.*, 7.22.
13. *Ibid.*, 16.4.
14. *Ibid.*, 15.21.
15. For a discussion of the classical Chinese notion of body, see Roger T. Ames, "The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Thought."
16. The Analects, 8.8.
17. *Ibid.*, 6.23.
18. For a discussion of Chinese cosmology, see Tu Wei-Ming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature."
19. Quoted in Lin Yu-tang, From Pagan to Christian, p. 82.
20. The Doctrine of the Mean, 22.
21. The Analects, 17.25.
22. Quoted in Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy (Vol. 2), p. 535.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 561
24. Conversations of Master Chu, 9:3b. See Daniel K. Gardner trans., Learning to be a Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, p. 119.
25. The Analects, 12.1.
26. *Ibid.*, 20.3.
27. *Ibid.*, 15.29.
28. Mencius, 13.1.
29. *Ibid.*, 13.4.
30. The Analects, 17.25.
31. Chu Hsi and Lu Tsu-Ch'ien, Reflections on Things at Hand, XII, 12. Chan trans., p. 272.

CHAPTER 5: WOMAN AS STRANGER: CAN HER CALL BE HEARD?

*[I wrote one letter to my father. I usually write to my parents together. I did, though, write to my intellectual "fathers"¹ when I could not talk with them face to face, even when we stayed in the same place. Writing usually makes me feel free to express myself. But what puzzled me was that more often than not, they did not respond to me. Even when they responded, my concern eluded their attentions. I thought at the time there must be something wrong with me. Thinking back, I begin to understand that they did not respond perhaps only because they did not know how to respond. They could not recognize what bothered me just as I did not really understand my own struggles at that time. I took these professors as the standard (de Beauvoir, 1952) since they were (and still are) my mentors one way or another, without realizing that I might be a stranger to them. I was a stranger to myself, too. I did not stop to think for a moment that they are men but I am a woman. Without acknowledging this strangeness both inside and outside of the self, a genuine and heartfelt conversation could not begin.]*² Acknowledging the universal strangeness within the self, Julia Kristeva believes that woman particularly occupies a position of stranger as she stays at the intersection between nature and culture, biology and language. On the boundary, her movement disrupts rigid structures of systems. Her fluidity is estranged from patriarchal order and her peculiar position makes her a stranger to both other and self. It is very difficult for her embodied voice to come out, but when her call is heard, the world can be different.

Strangers within Ourselves: A Subject-in-Process

. . . let us know ourselves as unconscious, altered, other in order better to approach the universal otherness of the strangers that we are—for only

strangeness is universal and such might be the post-Freudian expression of stoicism. (Julia Kristeva, 1993, p. 21)

If anything, psychoanalytic theory should point out how strange we are. (Marla Morris, 1999, p.77)

As an exiled intellectual woman in France, Kristeva has been concerned with the issues of stranger, foreigner, and estrangement throughout her works, either explicitly or implicitly. Her disillusion with politics in the 1970s took her away from collective politics into psychoanalysis in responding to the particularity and singularity of an individual person. In her later works, such as Strangers to Ourselves (1991), Nations without Nationalism (1993), Crisis of the European Subject (2000b), she returns to issues of ethics and politics, but with the psychoanalytic approach of "stranger within the self." With the recognition of the repressed other within our own psyches, we can build ethical and political relationships based upon understanding and love, rather than denial and violence. This is especially important in the contemporary age of a simultaneously fragmented and integrated world. This incorporation of social relationships--not as antithesis to the self but as (a hidden) part of the self--further makes a stable subject impossible, as her works on heterogeneous semiotic and symbolic aspects of language already posit a subject-in-process. In understanding this dynamic of the human psyche, she pays attention to the role of woman as stranger (Kristeva, 1989b, 1991), woman as subject-boundary (1993), the singularity of woman-subject (Kristeva, 1995, 1996, 2000a), and maternity as intersubjective embodiment of the self and disequilibrium of identity (Kristeva, 1980, 1993, 1995, 1996, 2000a, 2000b). While the experience of being a "stranger to ourselves" is universal, according

to Kristeva, the subject of woman brings her own imaginative and creative gifts due to her unique experience of the semiotic, and possibly pregnancy and motherhood.

To understand Kristeva's subject-in-process, we need first to discuss how her notion of the semiotic destabilizes the symbolic from both a linguistic and psychoanalytic viewpoint. For Kristeva (1984), the signifying process is composed of two inseparable elements: the semiotic and the symbolic. The semiotic refers to bodily drives, such as tones, rhythms, traces, which are characterized by movement and instability. The pre-Oedipal, pre-verbal semiotic function of language is feminine and oriented to mother's body. According to Smith (1998), in Kristeva's early writings, the link between the semiotic and femininity does not necessarily refer only to women's experiences because femininity is available to both women and men. As she moves more into psychoanalysis, female identity and maternal ethics are increasingly related to the semiotic. The symbolic, on the other hand, refers to the structure, grammar, or syntax of language. The symbolic function of language points to judgment and communication, which is necessarily social and historical. In contrast to the semiotic, the symbolic is characterized by stability and a static state. In psychoanalytic terms, the symbolic is linked to the social order and paternal law.

The relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic in language is dynamic through challenging and regulating each other to make signification possible, to guarantee both instability and stability in an open system of language. Interestingly, Kristeva interprets the semiotic as soma-social instead of "solely biological" (1984, p. 167). In other words, our earliest pre-verbal experiences are already situated in social and historical relationships although these unspeakable experiences are not yet marked

by words. I believe such a link is important for understanding how the semiotic participates in translating emotions and feelings into signs. In her later psychoanalytic works, she (1995) reiterates that bodily drives always already carry meanings and are in relationships. As Oliver (1997) argues, such an understanding of the semiotic directly challenges the dualism between the biological and the social and by bringing body back into language, Kristeva posits a fluid and relational subject.

In Revolution in Poetic Language (1984), Kristeva already links her semiotic and symbolic interpretations of language with psychoanalysis: "Our positing of the semiotic is obviously inseparable from a theory of the subject that takes into account the Freudian positing of the unconscious" (p. 30). The semiotic is the repressed, unconscious other, which has the potential to transgress the symbolic order--which is conscious social contract--by motility and polyvalence. Even though the semiotic is repressed, ineffable feelings and sensations unavailable to consciousness and verbalization can be manifested in our gestures, tones, tears, and laughter. To translate the semiotic into words or signs can help us to be in touch with our unconscious world so that we can understand ourselves more fully. As a result, the subject becomes a dynamic process through the interplay between the unconscious and the conscious.

The transition from the semiotic to the symbolic (Kristeva calls it "the thetic break"), as both Freud and Lacan assume, is made possible by separation. However, the thetic phase for Kristeva, already happens in the pre-Oedipal situation in which bodily structures of separation precondition the child's entrance into language. Before infants reach the mirror stage or oedipal struggle, their bodily experiences of expulsion, and their first utterance saturated by the semiotic have already prepared them for a symbolic

separation through language. "The child's first so-called holophrastic enunciations include gesture, the object, and vocal emission. . . . they are already thetic in the sense that they separate an object from the subject, and attribute to it a semiotic fragment, which thereby becomes a signifier" (p. 43). In this way, Kristeva brings the semiotic into a psychic process of separation, which challenges the traditional psychoanalytic picture of the child's entrance into language and the social only as a loss of connection with the mother. On the other hand, she does refer to the ending of the thetic phase by separation from the mother, and transference of the "semiotic motility onto the symbolic order" (p. 42). Going through the Oedipal stage of identity formation, the self usually represses the semiotic in order to move away from the mother's body and enter into the realm of the symbolic order. In this sense, the interplay between the unconscious and the conscious is parallel with the interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic.

The dialectic and interactive relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic, as Kristeva attempts to maintain, is complex, and her emphasis shifts as she goes through different stages of self formation and as she develops her own discourse toward psychoanalysis. The pre-Oedipal relationship between mother and child, Kristeva believes, is something neglected and repressed, but which can be recovered in order to renew signification and meanings. Due to this necessity to recover affects, drives, and energy, the post-Oedipal stage of the subject can release more creative potential if the symbolic order is imbued with the semiotic processes. She turns to poetic language for this possible regeneration of the signifying process. Later on she takes psychoanalysis as an important channel for the individual to get in touch with the semiotic and to make the symbolic more meaningful and fulfilling. She terms it a "second" return of the

semiotic within the symbolic (1984, p. 55). On the other hand, she suggests the necessity of establishing the symbolic to break through the maternal relationship through "the third party," which is paternal law. Although the semiotic/maternal is important for psychic fulfillment, the privilege of the symbolic/paternal in forming (Oedipal) identity is indisputable. Kristeva's emphasis on the importance of the symbolic in directing and regulating powerful semiotic "horror" happens coincidentally as she moves deeply into psychoanalysis. Although Power of Horror (1982) still maintains the power of the semiotic drives, her later psychoanalytic works such as Tales of Love (1987a), Black Sun (1989b), and New Melodies of Soul (1995) turn more to the importance of the symbolic. In her earlier works she focuses more on the mobile and transgressive role of the semiotic, while in her later works she moves into the necessity of the symbolic in releasing human creativity.

Regarding this move, John Lechte (1990) and Kelly Oliver (1993a) have different interpretations. The former focuses on the social contexts in which her discourses are situated while the latter focuses on the internal tension or "dialectical oscillation" between the semiotic and the symbolic. I agree with Oliver that in this unbalanced shift Kristeva does show a complex and even unpredictable interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic. However, I suspect that her deeper dive into psychoanalysis, in which linguistic exchange becomes crucial, is instrumental to her further move into the symbolic. Nevertheless, Kristeva's introducing of the semiotic into psychoanalysis and her emphasis on the maternal function in initiating the child into language and the social moves her beyond both Freud and Lacan although she still situates her discourse in their theoretical frameworks.

Kristeva emphasizes the special potential of maternity to be attentive to the semiotic--the alterity of the symbolic law--so that transgression of the law becomes possible. The milk and tears of the maternal body "are the metaphors of nonspeech, of a 'semiotics' that linguistic communication does not account for"(1987a, p. 249). Motherhood, as I will discuss further, provides a special zone in which women can get in touch with their own mothers again, yet at the same time they need to initiate and move their children into the realm of the symbolic. In addition to poetic language and psychoanalysis, maternity becomes the third important channel for women to negotiate between the semiotic and the symbolic in releasing the creativity of human life.

[Mother throws herself onto the bed, crying. The first time I see her tears. Crying for her own mother's death. I have never seen any of my grandparents. Too far away. Before I could make it, they died. I did write to my paternal grandmother once to invite her to my parent's house since she was having a difficult time with her other son and his wife. Now Mom's mom passes away and I will never be able to see her. Mother's tears. Sorrowful eternal separation. A school girl, horrified, I do not know what to do. I go over to her and pat her on the back and ask her softly: "Mama, do you want to have some fruits? I can buy some for you."]

What is underlying Kristeva's discussion of semiotic/symbolic and maternal function is her effort to reconceptualize the relationship between subject and other, or between the self and the stranger. When the semiotic as the repressed unconscious, the neglected other, or the rejected stranger returns after (Oedipal) identity, differences within the symbolic question any existence of a stable subject and a fixed self. However, such a second return is necessary; otherwise, the tyranny of Law would

prevail and an exclusive society hostile to strangers--in other words, hostile to selves--would dominate. On the other hand, the symbolic order cannot be destroyed completely. Otherwise, no society, no community, no loving relationship, no meaning of human life, and subsequently no self would exist. The pure semiotic is destructive because its dispersing energy exclude stability while the pure symbolic is repressive because its fixed structures excludes fluidity. As a result, Kristeva is more concerned with the limits between the semiotic and symbolic, between self and alterity, between individual and society. Echoing Foucault's limit attitudes if from another angle, Kristeva attempts to search for ways of preserving alterity, differences, strangeness without breaking away from the necessary boundary of identity. In other words, she focuses on recognizing the symbolic order but at the same time going beyond its law with the input of semiotic flux. The subject is constantly put on trial and alterity within the subject mobilizes the self in a process of opening to the other. As Jung Lee (1999) points out, in its multiplication and complexity, the Kristevian stranger appears both within and outside of the self to destabilize the subject from various angles. Or, to use Kristeva's (2000a) own terms, the subject is made possible in "a space of interlocking alterities" and through "plural decentering"(p. 67).

In Strangers to Ourselves (1991), Kristeva launches an imaginative move into a space in which living with the stranger/strangeness acknowledging her difference without exclusive discrimination is possible. It is first of all a relationship with the self while the otherness of the subject is usually repressed. Without recognizing the strangeness within, a constructive relationship between the self and the stranger cannot be formed. Through history, literature, philosophy, and of course psychoanalysis,

Kristeva asks: "Shall we be, intimately and subjectively, able to live with the others, to live *as others*, without ostracism but also without leveling?" (p. 2; emphasis in original). She implies that our very rejection of strangers might come from our own fear of becoming the other. However, what one does not want to recognize in the self—the repressed unconscious—could be the source of creativity and new meaning-making. If co-existence of differences within the self is refused, how could any possibility of relationships with others through mutual respect exist? "[A]s a journey into the strangeness of the other and of oneself, toward an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable" (p. 182), psychoanalysis offers us a new way to access our (relational) semiotic flow in a mutual acceptance of both self and other. The subject-in-process is made possible, in this way, not only by a dynamic interaction within, but also outside of the self with its relationship with the other.

Kristeva (1991) returns to Greek myths and finds that the first foreigner was a woman. Io, beloved by Zeus, was exiled by his jealous wife, Hera. She wandered from Europe to Asia and ended up in Egypt where she got permission from Zeus to give birth to a son. While pondering whether Io's story is the feminine version of Oedipus' drama, Kristeva further traces how her descendents as foreign women --the Danaides--made possible a new social structure (exogamous society) incorporating strangeness (foreignness). Women as foreigners and strangers expanded the horizon of the ancient civilization. At the same time, however, Kristeva (1993) argues that women might be strangers to themselves too:

The idea that the feminine is disquieting and strange is a Freudian idea, in his text on the uncanny. As for me, I've argued that the feminine is an unrepresentable passion, a rebel passion, that it's something uncanny for men *and* for women. Women are wary of their femininity; they have

many difficulties in gaining access to their femininity. Even if feminists say, "We are women!" and give their femininity a virile form, it is very troubling to be in contact and in sympathy with femininity--for men and women. (p. 181)

Again, echoing her claim about "strangers to ourselves" as universal for both women and men, Kristeva emphasizes the difficulty women encounter in getting in touch with their own strangeness. Even in some feminist efforts to claim women, the singularity of femininity is not recognized. But how to get access to this femininity? How to transform this "rebel passion," this disturbing strangeness into a power to expand the horizon of humanity? What is the feminine after all?

[I once said: I do not have to become a professor if it only means writing those boring books and essays. A show of arrogance to my professor. Actually I just did not know what I really wanted at the time. The whisper of a little girl with wide-opened sympathetic and caring eyes was too vague to be heard. Until I heard her call, ironically, it is still writing, though perhaps in a different style, that can make me feel at ease. But with the return of that tender voice, will anything else slip into the repressed? Could I ever know the stranger in me? Or get in touch with her? Or him? Or s/he?]³

Toward Creative Womanhood: Woman, Mother, and Self-Other

Women have the luck and the responsibility of being boundary-subjects: body and thought, biology and language, personal identity and dissemination during childhood, origin and judgment, nation and world--more dramatically so than men are. . . .The maturity of the second sex will be judged in coming years according to its ability to. . . [orient] toward a still unforeseeable conception of a polyvalent community.

(Julia Kristeva, 1993, p. 35)

Kristeva (1993, 1995, 1996, 1997) never hesitates to say that there are dangers within feminist movements, although she does not deny she is involved in feminism

from time to time as a woman who envisages the world differently. For her, the danger not only exists in women's unidirectional pursuit of phallic power and discourse, sacrificing their own specificity, but also lies in the classification of an essential Woman. She (1995) outlines three generations of feminism. The first generation is the feminism of struggling for equal rights between men and women. While it is instrumental in getting women more legal rights than before, it erases women's *differences* by inserting women into men's history. The second generation intends to restore women's differences in order to challenge phallic order another way. Though women are recognized for their own sake, an essentialized call for the feminine as a direct opposite to the masculine is problematic too, since this notion of women no longer identified with men is still homogenous. Kristeva's vision of the third generation of feminism, to which she is affiliated, not only provides a generative space for an individual woman's unique expression of herself but also challenges the very notion of a stable identity, especially sexual identity. So comes her question: "[Will feminism] manage to rid itself of its belief in Woman, Her power, and Her writing and support instead the singularity of each woman, her complexities, her many languages, at the cost of a single horizon, of a single perspective, of faith?" (p. 221). Kristeva also implies that the singularity of woman as creator is manifested by her re-appropriation of, rather than the simple rejection of, the symbolic through a semiotic investment in her own unique way. In her latest English book, Crisis of the European Subject (2000b), she reiterates the importance of singularity beyond equality in gender politics.

Kristeva's critique of the first and the second generation of feminism is related to her belief in a balanced relation between the semiotic and the symbolic. She believes

that assimilation into the symbolic/paternal law without the semiotic motility and retreat into the semiotic/maternal continent without actively participating in the transformation of stable symbolic structures are equally unsatisfactory to create a new womanhood. Although both efforts have indeed contributed to the improvement of women's status in society, both are vulnerable to further alienation of the feminine, leading to psychosis through different channels. For Kristeva, as Anne-Marie Smith (1998) points out, woman's simultaneous investment in her body, language, and imagination is a creative way of living with her loss and fulfilling her fluid subjectivity. This imaginative space in which woman keep in touch with the maternal/semiotic while re-organizing the psychic structure through investment in language is indeed a challenge that woman needs to face in creating her own singular being. Kristeva believes that the intellectual realm is a field which woman can not only participate in but also transform. The singularity of being a woman lies in her adventure into creating "new objects of thought" (Kristeva, 1996, p. 124) or knowledge that men cannot necessarily work through. This adventure has its own specificity in woman's sensitivity to the archaic mother-child bond. Woman's exiled and marginal position at the intersection between culture and nature, soul and body, self and other, inside and outside, and life and death, which is dramatized in motherhood, is a theme throughout Kristeva's writings. Woman's position is heterogeneous to the privileged in society and culture, and her marginality at the threshold, like a foreigner, exiles her from both paternal law and maternal intimacy. In discussing the intellectual as dissident, Kristeva (1986) discusses the peculiar status of being a woman:

A woman is trapped within the frontier of her body and even of her species, and consequently always feels *exiled* both by the general clichés

that make up a common consensus and by the very powers of generalization intrinsic to language. This female exile in relation to the General and to Meaning is such that a woman is always singular, to the point where she comes to represent the singularity of the singular--the fragmentation, the drive, the unnamable. (p. 296; emphasis in original)

The intricate relationship between woman's exile and her singularity indicates how multiplicity of language and body, when returned, can subvert a stable structure, setting free a subject-in-process in which both woman and femininity share an innovative possibility. Woman as stranger standing at the edge of law and instinctual drive and refusing to cross into either world inside the door, opens an opportunity to overcome her own estrangement to both worlds through her embodiment of the both to reach a new space in the unique style she prefers. The im/possible effort of an intellectual woman to think the unthinkable and represent the unrepresentable takes us beyond wherever we have been into the unknown--an unknown world of plural singularity. Woman's strangeness inside needs to be recognized by both herself and others so that difficulty with femininity in society can be transformed into a creative site for releasing new potentials of humanity.

[A care-taker among my peers when I was at school. A literature activity group gathering. Everyone gave one's own life creed. Mine was "to give is happier than to take." Applause from everyone (especially my male classmates) except one girl--brilliant and intelligent--who was suspicious. She asked me: "Are you going to remain this self-less? " She went to a very prestigious university later on. At college I heard that she tried to commit suicide (fortunately without success) because of a love affair or no longer being able to be a top student anymore or both. What would a woman do

when she lost her access to either realm or still worse, both? Going through my own identity storm, I often think of her and quietly wish her well after her recovery.]

Woman's singularity lies in her particularly intimate relation with the semiotic through her mother, her own motherhood, and herself. A poetic way of writing, advocated by Kristeva, is an embodied way of expressing the semiotic, to make linguistic codes and symbolic order more flexible, fluid, and creative. In going beyond the symbolic, woman, through poetic language, negotiates her difficult passage between the maternal and the paternal and writes through and about her own passions, desires, and instincts. To some degree, like an artist, woman writes as she paints, composes, performs so that rhythm flows and colors inspire. While Mikolchina (1991) argues that Kristeva believes "language is the homelessness of being" (p. 235), I think such a statement ignores how she recovers the semiotic into language to make language itself become a site on which heterogeneous elements co-exist and interact. Her attempt at understanding, however difficult it is, and bringing the semiotic back to language, crafts a space within language to embody the flux of life, challenging the dualism between language and body. While body is not necessarily opposite to language and woman is permitted, actually encouraged, to bring her sensual bodily experiences into language, a new world is opened and the exile from language, for woman, can be transformed into a creative journey home. Language, now, is not necessarily homeless but destabilizes home into a permanent re-construction. To achieve this end, woman can journey beyond the confinement of home to become a "female voyager" so that "her constant moving from place to place that enables her to view everything as strange may actually

help her to mediate more productively the relation between body and language" (Smith, 1996, p. 59).

[I hate His tyranny. Yet He is weak too, powerless. I hate Her power. Yet She is loving too, sorrowful. Actually I cannot really hate Her or Him. Nor can I really love. I choose to detach, to flee, to escape, to become a foreigner. Yet in another world, He and She do not disappear but multiply. Will I ever settle anywhere? Can I really find a home through writing in a permanent exile of go-between? Writing is neither Hers nor His, but couldn't it become mine through both Her and Him to reach a Third? Through absence of both? Could I ever write through this space of present absence, becoming myself?]

Such a close tie with instinctual drives, on the other hand, requires of women an increased effort to work through separation and differentiation in establishing Oedipal identity. A healthy separation with the mother, for woman, is more difficult than for man since the maternal body, according to the norm, cannot become an eroticized object for woman while man can project his desire onto another woman. Moreover, the turning away from mother into the symbolic implies a certain rejection of the self as a woman. But such a separation is necessary for a woman to go into the realm of language and social order as an independent person. In her studies of female depression, Kristeva (1989b) points out how a third party--the symbolic, the father--is important in order for woman to achieve autonomy from mother while overcoming her sadness. So Kristeva claims, "Matricide is our vital necessity" (p. 27). Regression into the blissful pre-Oedipal fusion with the archaic mother or the inability to overcome the mourning over the lost mother is destructive to forming one's identity. On the other

hand, Kristeva suggests, such a matricide must be coupled with the (second) return of the semiotic so that humanity can be expressed more fully and re-created. Woman's simultaneous "identification with and revolt against the symbolic order" (Smith, 1998) provides her the difficult but necessary opportunity to re-construct her own identification, ideally, through the embodiment of both feminine and masculine. As I will argue in the next section, such a notion of matricide as a necessary break before reclaiming femininity is problematic, especially for women.

Thinking about creative womanhood, Kristeva, especially after her son's birth, gives maternity a very important position in realizing and creating meaningful life. The stranger and alterity, through the form of the maternal other, collapses any possibility of a fixed identity at the margin of subjectivity and provides an intriguing space to re-think the relationship between self and other. For Kristeva, maternal love, "is at heart of all loving relationships" (1996, p. 62) which both sustain and destabilize identity.

[Is not Kristeva's vision of motherhood idealistic? The strong role of the maternal in Chinese culture contributes to creating a distinctively holistic philosophy and way of life, a unique Chinese character with its persistence of enduring pain and suffering, and a unique form of art through harmony in differences. On the other hand, it also reinforces the strong grip of patriarchy. Woman's own personal happiness and fulfillment dependent on becoming a mother can limit her life.]

In pregnancy and motherhood, woman's relationship with meaning and the other is transformed by a simultaneous embodiment of the other in the self and attention to the other as a subject: "To an other who is the child, neither the object of erotic desire nor the object of physiological need, but another subject" (Kristeva, 2000b, p. 106).

Such an interdependent yet respectful relationship with each other in a new motherhood distinctive from the archaic maternal relationship in which the semiotic dominates can become a creative act. The co-existence of self and other, nature and culture, and biology and sociology makes maternity a unique example of a subject-in-process in which the mother as a unified subject becomes an illusion. On the other hand, pregnancy and motherhood help women get in touch with their primary memory of and archaic relationship with mother so that resistance against the closure and stasis of the symbolic becomes stronger. Through a (homosexual) reunion with her mother in pregnancy and childbirth, woman also relives her childhood with her own child through love. Such a notion of the maternal body as the location of creativity and *jouissance* in femininity challenges the Freudian interpretation of childbirth as penis envy which Kristeva calls male phantasm. Maternity through its *differences* from the paternal rather than a reduced duplication or imitation of the father points to woman's own potential to create through both union and separation.

For Kristeva, "the maternal body is the module of a biosocial program" (1980, p. 241). Sociality is always already imprinted in the body of a symbolizing subjects. Contrary to criticisms that Kristeva reduces the maternal to the biological (Bulter, 1989), Kristeva suggests that a good enough woman be a woman who not only takes care of the child but also has her own "third party," which in turn helps the child work through into the social realm with less difficulty. "If maternity is to be guilt-free, this journey needs to be undertaken without masochism and without annihilating one's affective, intellectual, and professional personality, either. In this way, maternity becomes a true *creative act*, something that we have not yet been able to imagine"

(1995, p. 220; emphasis in original). This potential of maternity seems to me, creative as it is, greatly constrained by existing social, political, and gendered structures. How many women have enough institutional and emotional support to have both a successful professional life while being fulfilling mothers? Still this yet-to-be is a possibility for woman to create.

[Mengmeng, my nephew, likes to play with me, even when he was very little. I am not only fond of him but also amazed by him. To watch how he grows from that little creature in the crib fills me with awe, affection, and love. I still remember the moment when I taught him to say "not have" with a big panda toy hiding behind him or showing before his eyes. His sound, so soft, his gaze, hazy but with concentration, and his imitation, quite accurate and tirelessly repetitive, fascinate me beyond what I can describe. When he can speak, he is always eager to tell me something whenever I am around. I listen to him, patiently. I play with him. I tell him stories I have told him again and again lying beside him, and he corrects me whenever I make any inconsistency. He knows when to go down on the floor when I am too tired to hold him anymore: "Auntie, I will walk." He also knows how to upset me when he feels I deserve a "punishment." That cunning smile on the face of a three-year-old boy! Now Mengmeng's big dream is to come to the United States when he can be a graduate student. I still do not have a child of my own: Busy. But when will I not be busy?]

"A mother is a continuous separation, a division of the very flesh. And consequently a division of language--and it has always been so" (Kristeva, 1987a, p. 254). According to Kristeva, in contrast to both Freud and Lacan who believe language is the primary medium for the child to enter into the social and cultural realm, the

child's experience of separation already starts in the pre-Oedipal maternal relationship through bodily discharge and regulation. With the further implication of bodily drives in language, the mother-child relationship is not a seamless whole in which only dependency prevails. Separation through both body and language in the maternal makes the child's entrance into a position of subject possible. This separation, based upon relationship and bond attending to the multiplicity of language can be sustained through love.

[One of my best college friends, very charming, a most popular woman among young men, she always has stories to tell me. One day, unexpectedly, leaning against the window, she says, absorbed in her own mood, full of tears: "I do not think I have the ability to love." I am speechless first and then I manage to say: "Oh well, it is very difficult to love anyway." I know she is still mourning for the loss of her first love but she does not want to return to him. She adores her mother but has a difficult time with her somehow. More than ten years later, she has a lovely daughter of her own now: I can hear the girl's laughter on the phone. But she is still not really happy although she is very much committed to her daughter. Perhaps too committed. What is love, anyway?]

For Kristeva separation and bonding are both necessary to form loving relationships: "My knowledge that I can leave is what enables us to be together" (1996, p.75). This implicated sense of both leaving and togetherness brings a necessary interaction between psychic instability and stability. In terms of maternal love, an appropriate distance between mother and child is important in order to leave a certain space for symbolic elaboration. Such is the love which a mother offers the child--

freedom to explore, and growth into independence. Love and freedom can meet each other in a loving maternal relationship, though with much difficulty psychologically, historically, and socially, as with any other form of love embedded in the tolerance of the other's *differences*.

Reiterating the ideal of motherhood, Kristeva (1996) talks about the relationship between self and other as a space in which a loving inter/dependence and an autonomy are interactive with each other so that pain and suffering can be worked through:

I believe there can be no relationship to the other and no acceptance of alterity without a certain dependency, a certain debt, and a certain gift that presumes a subjectification to the other. When this goes too far, however, we run the risk of complete submission, a renunciation of the same for the other, and total enslavement. In that case, dependency becomes a slow death that can be quite painful. (p. 62)

Based upon this view between self and other and her basic assumption of "the stranger within the self," Kristeva (1996) ponders the possibility of a "paradoxical community" in which:

We try to help one another, all. But not a community that unifies and banalizes. We recognize one another, as foreigners, strangers. That is to say, as weak, that is to say, as potentially sick. And it is by being able to hear the other as tracked by some pathology, by some anomaly, as I myself am, that I refuse to see in the other an enemy. And this would be a basis for a form of morality. (p. 41)

Such a consciousness of and willingness to be with others through our own weakness and suffering indicates an ethics of a compassionate self-other relationship, implied by both a loving motherhood and a singular womanhood, which makes a living-together less violent and mutually respectful without the rejection of the other. In Nation without Nationalism, Kristeva (1993) names this community as a "polyvalent community" (p. 35), which corresponds to the heterogeneity of both

language and the female sex. While "strangers to ourselves" is a universal condition for humanity, the marginal position of being a woman makes woman's foreignness multiply in the sense of being open to both the external and the internal and to the implicated interplay between the two. To achieve balance between the internal and the external, echoing Foucault's aesthetics of self-care but talking about woman this time, Kristeva calls for "a permanent vigilance and a constant working on oneself"(1996, p. 126). Women's struggle to get in touch with their own femininity, which is devalued socially, while at the same time turning it into the source of creation is particularly hard and painful. However, through pain, weakness, and even pathology, woman as stranger can be more open to others who are particularly marked by other forms of strangeness and marginality. With alliance with other minority groups in society, woman has her unique stake in reconstructing society and politics. And this tolerance toward someone different rather than hostility towards the other as enemy becomes a cornerstone upon which a community connected by love and destabilized by freedom can be built.

[In junior high school, I had a classmate who was very disruptive to the class. His table-mate refused to team with him anymore and certainly no one wanted to sit besides him. (In Chinese classrooms, one boy and one girl are paired to share one table. So comes an endless game of the middle line which is not supposed to be crossed.) As shy as I was, I volunteered to sit with him at the same table, smiling away others' satire. I simply did not believe that a schoolboy could be so bad as deserving to be excluded by others. Though my kindness softened his temper, he still did not make his way into a privileged high school. He did manage to enter a college, though. When he visited me at home during a college holiday, I was startled: He has grown into a

man with an intimidating shape. However, his manner was much milder and he looked much happier. He told me with that funny look that he was popular among his classmates. I secretly asked myself: Would I ever be brave enough to approach him with the same kindness and the same faith in him if he turned into a violent and aggressive man? However, doesn't the show of violence and aggression hide the inner softness and the wounded desire for love? And what can the possible repression of one's aggressive drive do to oneself if polite smiles and guarded detachment eludes others' attention? Is aggression part of human life not only psychically but also socially? How can we live with it without destruction if we cannot get rid of it completely? What if "the stranger within the self" turns out to be destructive and disruptive? Can a simple openness to this stranger be constructive enough? Whether we tame it or release it, where is it going to drive us? What would an ethics or morality be beyond a mutual acceptance and respect for each other (and internally the self)?]

An ethics of both love and freedom through the strange site of otherness, according to Kristeva, is necessary for a creative selfhood in a global society in which the issue of foreigners must be confronted. In the ideal of "nations without nationalism," Kristeva envisages a new world without rigid national boundaries but does not give up national identity, in which foreigners are not treated as foreigners but their differences can be recognized and accepted. A cosmopolitan attitude with attention to the specificity of the individual. An intermingling of both commonality and particularity. A community with the common ground of respecting the "stranger within" to reach out for the "stranger without." A self-other movement based upon a

deliberate and fluid work on oneself. Can this communal and self-creative processes of the subject support a new relationship in which attacker and victim can be worked through within the self (Kristeva, 1995) without projecting violence out into the society?

Language, the Gendered Self, and Culture: A Polyphonic Dialogue with the Kristevian Subject

I am deeply appreciative of Kristeva's daring project of re-thinking the human psyche through bringing body into language, not only following but also going beyond Freud and Lacan to carve out space for woman's singularity and creativity. The unique path she draws, leading to human creativity through an interactive relation between connections and differences, challenges the taken-for-granted notions of identity, subject, andself, and opens up new possibilities. A promising space for woman to express her individuality and strangeness without being marginalized in society. A new vision of a paradoxical community with plural singularity. A reconstructed self-other relationship based upon the notion of "the stranger within." A new politics of nation without nationalism. Still, reading Kristeva needs to be accompanied by dialogue, conversation, and contestation.

Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) notion of polyphonic dialogue actually influenced Kristeva's early works, which is obvious from the title of her writing, *Polylogue*. Although Kristeva does not really focus this theme again later, her notion of the heterogeneous construction of language, self, and life is not incompatible with this notion of polyphonic dialogue. Polyphony always leaves room for differences to exist, whether in a relationship with self or a relationship with others. Realizing myself as a woman from a very different language and cultural background, I approach the

Kristevian subject through this polyphonic space. My encounter with her notion of the subject will be contingent upon *non-consensual differences* but without assuming that any theory is presumed to cover the whole of humanity across diversities.

Reading Kristeva, for me, not only as a woman but also as a "foreign" woman, is very unsettling, even upsetting. Kelly Oliver (1993) has a similar experience in reading Kristeva's self-contradictions. According to Kristeva, the complicated balance between the semiotic and the symbolic, whether through poetic language, motherhood, or psychoanalysis, leads to creativity without falling into psychosis. I find it a very difficult if not impossible task to accomplish. It is not only difficult in itself, but I also feel resistant due to my own background in Chinese language and Chinese culture. One of challenges I will make is that the binary Kristeva sets between the semiotic and the symbolic, which sustains the founding moment of identity upon separation, makes creation through relationships particularly vulnerable. Even when possible through artistic expression, poetic writing, or maternity, more often than not, creativity made possible by the binary carries strong psychotic potential. As a Chinese, I believe a more holistic understanding of language might make us re-think the assumed pathology of the human psyche, for the human psyche is more interconnected within and self-generated through interrelationships. The bridge between the semiotic and the symbolic, as narrow as Kristeva depicts, is actually wider because the semiotic permeates human life, and independent personality can be founded upon interdependence rather than separation. As I follow her notion of the subject, I am suspicious of the split between the semiotic and the symbolic, especially when it has

close ties with the maternal and the paternal, the unconscious and conscious respectively.

Actually, Kristeva does recognize the differences between Chinese language as ideograph and phonetically oriented languages such as English and French, and amazingly, she took time to try to learn a number of Chinese characters. And she is indeed skeptical about whether the Oedipal complex is applicable to the Chinese psyche. However, this does not prevent her from pondering the pre-Oedipal quality of Chinese language. Even if her categorical assumption is correct, it does challenge her very notion of the pre-Oedipal semiotic as opposite to the symbolic since Chinese in its spoken and written forms embodies both the semiotic and the symbolic. Besides, Chinese myth is less about Oedipus and more about the *Tao* which is hardly confined by the phallus.⁴ To sustain the role of phallic organization, Kristeva comments that "Oriental nothingness probably better sums up what, in the eyes of Westerner, can only be regression [to the maternal]" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 240). But it is precisely through Westerner's eyes that the other potential of the stranger (the Oriental) is reduced within the Westerner's own framework. To go beyond the confinement of one's own language is almost impossible, but at the limit of language opens a window to other ways of life, which cannot be achieved by universal framework of interpretation. I believe if the semiotic and the symbolic do not act as rivals but as partners throughout an individual's life might open the door much wider to creative subjectivity. While realizing that what I see through my eyes is situated in my own context as a Chinese woman, I also intend to point out Kristeva's inner paradoxes and conflicting gestures regarding the issue of

woman, mother, and femininity and subsequent relationships with their counterpart:
man, father, and masculinity.

Kelly Oliver (1993a) reads Kristeva as "a melancholy theorist longing for her mother-tongue" (p. 16). Actually Kristeva (2000b) confesses her difficulty in keeping her mother tongue because, as a language, Bulgarian is nearly dead. So comes the birth of "Bulgaria, my suffering." Yet Bulgarian still comes back to her, in dreams, when she loses words or expression in alien languages, in trouble, when she is too tired to be able to calculate rationally.

Understanding giving up one's native language as a revengeful matricide, Kristeva attempts to build a new home upon this musical "still warm corpse of my maternal memory" (p. 169), immersed in suffering, above suffering:

But above this hidden crypt, on this stagnant reservoir that is disintegrating, I have built a new residence in which I dwell and that dwells in me, and in which there unfolds what one might call, not without affectation obviously, the true life of the spirit and the flesh. (p. 166)

The almost lost mother tongue keeps coming back, "at the outer edge of words set to music and of unnamable urges" (p. 169), brings imagination to her existence in French, so that she can fly higher with more strength and freedom. This distant yet nurturing intimacy keeps calling, invisible, as she travels into a new world.

[At the threshold of fantasy and reality, I knock on the door willing to go back to the World. The door is closed and indifferent to my call. What can I do now? To daydream, or write, or just read? I read Kristeva's book, Interviews, for a while. Then, I ask myself: Why not start to write something casually? Pulling out my journal, Chinese words and English words mingle together to flow out, mostly English words

since I have learned to think in English. I just write them down randomly. Reading what I have written down, I feel Chinese and English fit together so nicely while translation is impossible and not necessary. Chinese come out naturally when English fails me. English commands me with its own structure and rhythm, but more like a game. What a natural flow. Before I finish my practice, though, I am back to the World, a world in which I must express myself either in Chinese or in English. In my mind, though, the two languages are already mingled, sometimes in honeymoon sometimes in conflict, with, unsurprisingly, many English grammar errors.]

Listening to the call, she brings the semiotic back, yet resists being lured back to a childhood mother tongue; she secures the position of the symbolic important for a person through matricide to become independent. What I am interested in asking is: if Bulgarian as a mother tongue were still alive with its own symbolic structure, would matricide be any different for Kristeva? Would this matricide also be necessarily accompanied by an overthrow of native symbolic laws in order for her to enter into another set of symbolic laws? Can the metaphor of native language as mother tongue and the very fact that mother is usually the one who leads children into the realm of language, which is both symbolically and semiotically, constructed necessarily lead to the metaphor of the maternal as the semiotic without a symbolic structure? Regardless of the differences in language systems and cultural traditions, the very link and binary that Kristeva implicitly or explicitly makes between maternal/semiotic and paternal/symbolic is problematic for me.

Kristeva's usage of the maternal and the paternal corresponds to the semiotic and the symbolic. She emphasizes the importance of the semiotic in both the pre-

symbolic stage and the post-symbolic stage, while on the other hand she suggests the necessity of establishing the symbolic to break through the maternal relationship by introducing paternal law--the distant father out of the reach of the child. While the semiotic/maternal does play its subversive role in mobilizing the static symbolic structure, the traditional privilege of the symbolic/paternal in forming the Oedipal identity is sustained without being re-thought by Kristeva. Psychoanalytically speaking, the maternal and the paternal are all metaphors for psychic representations. If I think of the paternal at a metaphorical level as a "third party" that promotes the child's entrance into the social realm, Kristeva still has her own tensions, pointing to contradictory directions. On the one hand, she admits that the "third party" leading the child away from the maternal into the symbolic can be a woman, a man, or even an institution. On the other hand, she claims that father as nurturer in the family "will decimate the paternal function. . . .Up to the present, in the division of sexual roles, the mother takes care of the child, the father is farther away. The father represents the symbolic moment of separation" (1996, p.118-19). Father's role in leading the child into the symbolic is reinforced. She further argues that there is an under-estimation of the paternal function. But precisely what is this paternal function? In Tales of Love, she talks about the "father of the individual prehistory" as a loving father embodying both the maternal function and the paternal function, which makes the child's move into the symbolic less painful and more pleasurable. Such a redefinition of father, who plays a primary symbolic role, holds a promising potential to further challenge traditional psychoanalytic theory. However, on other occasions, while acknowledging the shifting of the positions of mother and father away from "the norm," she argues that

the mixing of the paternal and maternal functions can result in more borderline cases (1996, p. 119). While the archaic mother must be "killed" for psychic independence, the archaic father becomes the cornerstone for that independence, which sets again the tone of the privilege of the father and the paternal.

Regarding the issue of female homosexuality, Kristeva is ambivalent too. On the one hand, she believes that "female creators need at least some degree of female homosexuality, whether it exists in reality or in fantasy" (1996, p. 67). On the other hand, she refers to the lesbian family with children as refusing the symbolic that is paternal (1997). As Butler (1989) argues, Kristeva fails to understand that female homosexuality can be socially and culturally expressed to work at the edge of the paternal law, creating new meanings--or in Kristeva's own words, "new objects of knowledge." Butler further points out that what underlies Kristeva's approach to homosexuality is the assumption that "heterosexuality is coextensive with the founding of the symbolic" (p. 109). In other words, Kristeva's binary between the paternal/symbolic and the maternal/semiotic makes her own effort to create subjectivity subversive of the paternal law problematic.

I suspect the tensions within Kristeva reflect the crisis of traditional psychoanalysis especially regarding the Oedipal identity even in the West. To understand the self under an emerging, dramatically different, picture of family structure, new vocabularies and new theories which challenge traditional discourses are needed. The metaphor of the maternal and paternal, because of its close link with mother and father, runs the risk of essentializing femininity and masculinity without fully acknowledging how the very terms of mother and father are socially and

historically constructed. As gender is subject to fiction (Munro, 1998b; Pinar, 2001), so are father and mother. *[Summer holiday was never really a holiday for me. I am either busy with writing or busy with studies. When I write at home, father usually brings me fruit, quietly putting some on my table. I take it quietly. I am usually afraid of being with him by myself. Those awkward moments of silence are saturated by my refusal to either confront or connect. My stubborn refusal to compromise with my father is also a refusal to compromise with myself--I am not only my mother's daughter, I am also my father's child: father is in me somehow.]* The term "matricide" is problematic to me too, since it implies a full break. Although I understand that it refers to the archaic maternal relationship, what puzzles me is why we must kill mother first in order to declare independence, then painfully reclaim the maternal relationship through recovering the semiotic? Can not interdependence be sustained at the moment of founding independence? The Western (psychoanalytic) ideal of (psychic) independence by both matricide and patricide (taking over the symbolic from the father) needs to be rethought. The dominant family structure of the nuclear middle-class family in which mother is only a care-taker is changing, challenging psychoanalysis to work through its own transformation. Taking a cultural point of view, I also want to point out that the Chinese self is under no pressure to claim its independence by matricide or patricide or both. Interdependence rather than rebellious independence is a continuous thread throughout one's life, sustaining the self. Furthermore, ideal harmonic family relationships are expected to transfer to society with symbolic order established. As problematic as this might be, it certainly shows another picture of the human psyche.

The issues of the semiotic and the symbolic, and interdependence and independence takes me to Chinese as a language, which shows a much intertwined landscape of the self. As I have already mentioned, Kristeva (1989a) acknowledges the particular features of Chinese, through the phonetic and grammatical polyvalence of words and the intricate relationships between figurative representations and written forms, modifying the pattern of referent/signifier/signified. Meaning/sound/thing are fused into an ideogram. Chinese has many homophones; one word can be used as a noun, verb, or adjective, depending on its context. To fix the meaning of a thing, or a process, or a quality is impossible without approaching it holistically. Because of such an intertwining relationship among the concept, the sound, and the thing, Chinese ideograph writing cannot be confined within the Western framework of the subject-object system. Lin Yutang (1959) claims that the very notion of thing-in-itself is alien to the Chinese language and mind. Kristeva also points out that the written structure of one word can be a combination of two or more pictograms. One good example she gives is *hao* (好), the verb "to love" and the adjective "good," is a combination of the signs for "woman" (女) and "child" (子) or "female"(女) and "male"(子).

Li Leyi's (1993) studies on the evolution of Chinese characters confirm the interpretation of the mother-child relationship through its evolution from the pictographic stage to the modern style of writing. His studies also indicate that Kristeva's emphasis on the role of mother in Chinese society could be true, tracing the root of "good" to maternal relationships with a non-accidental observation about the sex of the child: male. Li Xin (in press) also points out how Chinese words form terms (two words together to function like one word) and phrases (multiple combinations of

words) in a similar interconnected way. What is also very interesting to me is that Chinese terms or phrases can be made from two abstract characters to convey something concrete, or *vise versa*, can use concrete characters to convey abstract concepts, or a mixture of the two. A simple example: 尺寸, which means the size or the degree, is composed of "feet/ruler" (尺) and "inch" (寸). Two concrete words compose one abstract concept. 东西 means thing, and is composed of "east" (东) and "west" (西). Two abstract words compose one concrete word. Another example, 空洞 means hollow or devoid of contents and is composed of empty (空) and hole or cave (洞). A concept is formed from one concrete word and one abstract word. Contradictory words are combined to convey one meaning, such as 长短, length, is composed of "long"(长) and "short" (短). Many a four-character phrase has an interesting story behind its abstract meanings. Such a mingling of the concrete and the abstract in language and linguistic appropriation of contradictions asks us to rethink psychoanalytic assumptions about language and self. This complicated relationship between meanings and structures of words and phrases in an ideograph, in combination with an intonation system (*hao* as a verb is in the fourth tone and as an adjective is in the third tone), embody both the semiotic and the symbolic at the same time. As I have argued in Chapter 4, the Chinese self in its implication within the language is fluid and relational without the dichotomy of mind and body.

With a certain understanding of Chinese language and her studies of other language systems, Kristeva (1989a) nevertheless claims "the signifying system studied by Freud has a universality that 'traverses' constituted national languages" (p. 272). If this universality can be claimed at the level of acknowledging the existence of the

unconscious, cannot the movement of the unconscious have its own rhythm because of differences in linguistic and cultural systems? If, as Kristeva suggests, Chinese writing presupposes a speaking and writing individual who stays at a "pre-Oedipal phase--dependency on the maternal, socio-natural continuum, absence of clear-cut divisions between the order of things and the order of symbols, predominance of the unconscious impulses" (1977, p. 56), does this mean that the Chinese self or Chinese culture at large is more marked by "the regression" to the maternal? Or can the unconscious and the conscious co-exist explicitly through language? Or is the very link between the semiotic and the unconscious questioned? If the unconscious is universally genetically proven (Kristeva, 1989a), does it not also require cultural and social transmutation of a universal psychological framework to interpret another kind of self in another kind of language system, in this case, Chinese? To understand the otherness of Chinese, if we do not fall into the claim--a claim Kristeva contends is racist--that the Chinese self is immature compared to the Western subject, do we need another set of vocabularies to convey the complexity of self, language, and culture? Needless to say, as relational as the Chinese self is, the uniqueness of each individual person with his/her own mode of life cannot be erased. Perhaps the call for openness to the stranger based upon the necessity of the strangeness within the self is problematic because it easily runs the risk of assimilating the other into the self. That is what Kristeva guards against by insisting on the irreconcilable nature of the semiotic and the symbolic, but with a certain failure, I would contend, at least when she confronts the Chinese language and the Chinese self.

[Tired of reading Kristeva, I come out of my room to join in new Chinese students' discussion. They are talking about the choice of "leaving or staying." While

male students argue with me about "the mainstream" and "the margin," female students turn to me asking: "What am I going to do with my child if I stay here? How can I keep the Chinese tradition for ta (Chinese pronunciation of s/he or her/him is the same)? " What a coincidence while I am trying to work through Kristeva's theory about language and maternity! How do I know? I reply: "Perhaps you cannot, unless you can manage to make ta really learn the language, and bring ta back and forth between two cultures spending substantial time in China with ta." Neither can I really think about having a child of my own who stays here without any Chinese identity. For Kingston (1989), an American-born Chinese who had no experiences of China at the time of writing her book, China hovers over her like a ghost. It could be a bad ghost not only because of mother's distant tales but also due to the implicit influence of the media and politics here. It could be an idealized image, too. My Australian-Chinese friend cried for days about the breakdown of her beautiful dream of China when she really went to China for a visit. Without a real encounter with a culture and its people, language itself still fails since it remains at an imaginary level. But what if ta stays here and chooses to become an American? What if ta resists learning Chinese and ta prefers English as a mother tongue? Still what if the repressed collective unconscious returns anyway regardless of whatever ta wants to do with ta's life? Perhaps the fluidity of national borders will bring a new type of person and a new identity across the border. I am indeed intrigued by the possibility of becoming a truly bilingual person from childhood, across Chinese and English, two dramatically different language systems.]

To recognize the relational nature of the Chinese language, just as to recognize the relational nature of the Chinese self, does not necessarily mean that this relationship

is itself free from paternal law and its patriarchal implications. Again, tracing the evolution of Chinese characters can show how the maternal, while it can be valued, is still inferior to the paternal. For example, the Chinese character "female" (女) comes from a kneeling woman, and "married woman" (妇) comes from a kneeling woman who holds a broom to clean the house, while "human" (人) comes from a standing man. Kneeling in ancient Chinese rituals means respect for the elder and the superior. After checking on all characters listed in the book, I find that almost any word whose pictorial representative traces back to woman is marked by kneeling. However, words like "human" or "guest," which are supposed to have both female and male connotations, are pictorially traced back to male figures as the standard. Kneeling men's figures can also be found, either as showing awe toward heaven or indicating his suppressed status.

As Hall and Ames (2000) observe, Chinese characters in which one component part is "female" (女) often indicate negative qualities such as 奸(lewdness), 奴(slavehood), 妒(envy), 嫉(jealousy), 婪(greed), and 姘(illicit sexual relationships). In addition to indicating family relationships, female beauty and charm also make up a major group of words with "female" (女) as a component part, such as 婷(graceful), 娇(charming), 娜(tenderly attractive), and 妍(beautiful). There are some exceptions, though, for example, 始(origin), 娲(female creator), 婺(star corresponding to female) indicating female creative power, 娱(happiness), 嬉(play), and 妙(wonderful) indicating positive qualities. It is clear that gender biases do appear at the linguistic level. Upon reflection, I cannot hold my previous position (Chapter 1) about social and cultural constructions of language more than language itself being implicated in

patriarchy. The interactive relationship between language and culture makes it almost impossible to separate the two and their respective influence on gender construction. On the other hand, it would be simplistic to claim that language itself is patriarchal. The intricate relationship between and co-existence of the paternal and the maternal in the Chinese language, in a negative sense, again makes the boundary between the semiotic and the symbolic permeable. The assumed opposition between the two can collapse in another differently constructed language in which the semiotic and the symbolic co-exist in an explicit way, whether in a positive or negative sense. Women's script in ancient China is a more syllabic language and is simultaneously concrete and abstract, emotional and logical, singular and multiple, oral and written. I will not go into details here. But what I attempt to point out is that when the semiotic/maternal is explicitly inherent in language, the initiation of the child into the language is not necessarily marked by separation from mother. The founding of independence upon separation in psychoanalysis is not universally applicable to all cultures, as some cultures go through their own psychic struggles not characterized by the Oedipal. I have no intention to dismiss psychoanalysis as a way to understand and interpret the human psyche, but I intend to bring more of a sense of interdependence into the framework so that both relationships and freedom can be valued.

The problematic of language, the gendered self, and culture retains its polyphonic nature after my gendered and cultural encounter with Kristeva. Differences sustain, so further conversation is possible. While I question her binary of the semiotic/maternal and the symbolic/paternal, I appreciate her own interactive and even contradictory postures towards this split and her subversive strategy of bringing body

back into language through the introduction of the semiotic. I also want to point out that Kristeva painstakingly emphasizes the significance of the semiotic, even in the process of separation. Situated herself in psychoanalysis, she nevertheless challenges it and makes a certain breakthrough in traditional frameworks.

An Impossible Synthesis: Self, Community, and Creativity

Touring through Foucaultian self-creation, the Confucian relational self, and the Kristevian subject-in-process, one may find it difficult and almost impossible to live in this space full of ambivalence and contradictions. Perhaps the project of re-thinking the human self, as complicated and shifting as it can be, is itself unthinkable in any coherent way. As Kristeva notices, Eastern wisdom leaves a space for ambivalence and paradoxes. I find it particularly unsettling, yet challenging, to carve out a space for weaving these fragmented threads together while intentionally leaving some strings unattached. If life itself is fragmented, how can I weave out a coherent self? Still, I am going to attempt to show patterns despite the chaos (or emerging at the edge of chaos) of this gendered East/West inquiry into selfhood without any intention of making a seamless whole. While leaving readers to make their own weavings, I will not try to bring a synthesis but attempt to address several issues through these three thinkers with whom I have been dealing in order to understand self/other in differences, community, and creativity.

The three thinkers, coming from different intellectual and personal backgrounds, focus on the notion of the self, through different theoretical angles. Foucault's self-care put the self at the center of his discourse in his later work, while social and cultural constraints are what need to be transgressed by a creative subject. Although Confucius

and Kristeva follow a very different path in thinking about the human self, they both acknowledge that any political, social, or cultural transformation cannot be accomplished without the transformation of the self. Kristeva says, "any sociopolitical transformation is also a transformation of subjects because it alters subjects' social constraints, experience of pleasure, and more fundamentally, language" (1996, p. 101). Kristeva's vision of a polyvalent community is based upon her psychoanalytic understanding of "stranger within the self." Confucius also regards the self as the starting point of social reform to achieve his political ideal, although his emphasis is more on expanding commonality through the circle of social relationships than on differences both within and outside of the self. Still Confucius has his own vision of independent personality that holds one's own inner principles and aspirations without being controlled by external influences.

The three writers' focus on the self is also marked by a dynamic and process-oriented view in contrast to the Western modern notion of the transcendental self. While Confucius is an ancient sage who does not base his thoughts upon a highly differentiated way of thinking, whose theory is marked by a suspicious flavor of "primitive thought," Foucault goes back and forth between the pre-modern, modern, and post-modern to recover Western ancient wisdom with his own critical twist. Western modern traditions are under Foucault's direct challenge while Confucian thought points in another direction to fulfill humanity. Confucianism as an ancient tradition already emphasizes self-transformation as a life-time project that is open-ended. Kristeva utilizes psychoanalysis--itself a modern creation--to mobilize the

subject through alterity and differences. Her notion of subject-in-process is a result of questioning the transcendental self.

This emphasis on a transformative self from three great thinkers across different historical times and spaces forms a sharp contrast with our current schooling: almost opposite to this teaching, our schools do not start with the individual person, but start with social standards and cultural norms. In China, schools promote an explicit political agenda to unify individual persons into one ideal. In the United States an implicit normalization process through media, technology, and culture makes explicit advocacy for the individual abstract and untenable (Pinar, 1994). To renew our understanding of self, community, and creativity complicated by the discourses of Foucault, Kristeva, and Confucius, it becomes crucial to rethink the important issues of curriculum and education. What does the self mean and what does that mean to a curriculum as a journey? What is the relationships among knower, known, and knowing (Pinar, 1994)? Can we cultivate our children through an ecology of selfhood yet at the same time release their own "creative energy" (Berry, 1988) through imaginative individualization? Can we build a school community in which strangers/outcasts can join in but still preserve their own uniqueness, and, subsequently, creative potential? Can interconnected networks through teacher, student, and text (Doll, 1993) be generative enough to meet each child's curious eyes in his/her own strange yet probing way? Starting with adult fantasy of national standards, cultural homogeneity, and technological hegemony or with teacher's requirements for homework, discipline, and grades, unfortunately present in our schools, shows a very different picture and asks a very different set of questions from starting from

curriculum as a journey of selfhood. The shift to the self is an issue that needs to be re-thought on both sides of the ocean.

Speaking of norm and self, both Foucault and Kristeva share their critiques about what is hidden behind the individualism that is promoted through media and technology: a homogeneous mechanism which produces docile bodies or "new maladies of the soul" (Kristeva, 1995). As I point out in Chapter 3, Foucault argues that the normalizing disciplinary power of modern society is behind the screen of abstract individualization. For Kristeva, in the contemporary age, modern man is carried away by images without stimulating imagination and consumed by insignificant objects without getting psychic satisfaction. As a result, "your expression is standardized, your discourse becomes normalized" (p. 8) and the "automation of humanity" (2000a, p. 7) threaten us. Without a discourse of his own, modern man is losing himself in an overwhelmingly consumer, materialistic, and technological society. Encountering any discourse about the self, we need to pay close attention to how this discourse is implicated in power relationships to stand out as a standard "talk" or a unique effort that an individual makes to represent and articulate. Kristeva and Foucault may have disputes about whether or not psychoanalysis itself is a normalizing discourse, which I will discuss. Confucian thought is usually criticized as providing a political ideal and social norm. Again, it depends which side of Confucianism you pick, and how you understand Confucius' original thinking. Foucault and Kristeva both can be unsettling because their positions constantly shift and sometimes even in a contradictory way, which nevertheless shows the kaleidoscope nature of the human self. Confucius can be difficult to read, too, especially for the modern (Western) mind.

While *ren* can be said to be a social and political norm, what *ren* represents is not fixed. Its meaning shifts under different contexts, referring to a complicated, multi-layered, and non-unitary notion. It makes any single translation impossible. If it can be said that the Confucian self is "normalized" by the ideal of *ren*, or *junzi*, the ideal or the norm itself is shifting, and everyone's path to achieve it is also different, which in turn transforms the moral norm. What I intend to do is to renew Confucius' vision of the self (and its relationship with norm) as dynamic, open, and interactive. This process-oriented notion of the self in all these three thinkers asks us to seriously rethink how teachers can participate in the student's journey of self-transformation and personal cultivation.

Foucault's (1978) studies of sexuality are mainly from historical, social and cultural points of view to understand how power relationships permeate discourses about sexuality including psychoanalysis, to normalize the self toward certain truths. On the one hand, he acknowledges how Freud's psychoanalytic revolution challenges the repressive myth of sexuality and approaches the relationship between power and desire in a more complex way. On the other hand, he questions conformist "normalizing functions of psychoanalysis" (p. 5) and points out that by grounding sexuality in the law, desire is surrounded by the "old order of power" (p. 150). His brief personal experience with psychoanalysis ended "in a fit of pique," as James Miller (1993, p. 62) describes it. Does Kristevian psychoanalytic discourse escape this normalizing tendency with its own ground in the paternal law? It is hard to tell but Kristeva defends herself. Her first defense involves the effort to go "as deeply as possible into the psychic particularity of sexual and love organization" (1997, p. 338).

This deep probing into the human psyche cannot be done only through analyzing social conditions. The second is related to the tension between analysis of the universal and the individual. Kristeva believes that it is the paradox of every human science that is attentive to both giving meaning to the individual and understanding the deep structure running through individuality. In the case of psychoanalysis, a neutral position cannot be assumed, and its discourse "pretends to some objectivity and at the same time we elaborate this discourse through what is often painful involvement in the observation" (p. 339). This contradiction of sustaining two contradictory positions is indeed present in Kristeva's works. Her "norm" of Oedipal identity privileged by symbolic order is constantly destabilized by reformulation of the maternal and paternal functions throughout her writings. Her essential consideration of maternity as a relationship embodying both self and other is complemented by the singularity of womanhood. Attending to both the universal and the particular, she is constantly lured to either one pole or the other. Refusing to settle down anywhere, however, she chooses to stay on the swing. Perhaps any theory attending to the particularity and uniqueness of the self, while required by the necessity to generalize in theorizing, must compromise between the universal and the singular. To have both simultaneously is very difficult but maybe not impossible, as creative potential might lurk within the very movement towards the both.

As I have been mentioning, how to build dynamic interconnections through which creativity can be released is my main focus in rethinking the notion of self. Both Kristeva and Foucault pay close attention to the issue of differences, but Kristeva explicitly elaborates how the differences within can lead to a paradoxical community in

which differences become generative in polyphonic relationships to respect and tolerate strangers. Foucault seldom provides any vision of community, though he implies a community which enables self-creation of both self and other. Both Kristeva and Confucius think about the relationship between self and other, but Kristeva pays much more attention to alterity, differences, and the deep psychic structure underlying this relationship. Confucius, while also paying attention to "the self within," not in a psychoanalytic sense but in the sense of inner cultivation of independent personality, on the other hand, expands the self to the other through continuity, similarity, and the social structure supporting this relationship. Actually similarity also attracts Kristeva's attention, but not commonality among different people; instead, it is a commonality of *differences*: differences both within and without. Perhaps without a certain sense of commonality, human community cannot be really grounded. Without differences, though, a community cannot exist, either (Britzman, 1998).

To use a metaphor, Confucian selfhood locates the self in the center and expands itself outward toward others and the cosmos. The Foucaultian subject disperses the self without making any explicit interconnections although there are underground channels and subways to make connections. The Kristevian subject also has individual locations of the self, but there are bridges and networks within, between, and among different selves. As a result, the Confucian community is a harmonious community, the Foucaultian community is a subversive community, and the Kristevian community is a polyvalent community. To promote creativity, all three of them attend to the aesthetic, though in different ways, each with the hope of releasing the human potential of creation. Foucault's notion of self-creation is aesthetics of self-care based

upon the transgressive potential of art. Kristeva's notion of aesthetic creation on the bridge between the semiotic and the symbolic brings the self in touch with the source of inspiration and imagination through embodied representation. Both of them believe that "aesthetics takes on the question of morality" (Kristeva, 1995, p. 223) and ethics to help the self go beyond dogmas and laws. Not focusing on the transgressive potential of aesthetics, the Confucian holistic notion holds aesthetic subjectivity as part of the self through harmonizing the self with transformative and self-generative processes of heaven and earth. As Tu (1985) insists, Confucian aesthetic subjectivity dissolves the distinction between subject and object, self and society, humanity and nature while also awakening us from the ordinary mundane routine so we become co-creators of and with the cosmos. This sense of co-creation necessarily lacks the sharp edge of break and discontinuity so obvious in Kristeva and Foucault, although the Kristevian subject, through loving relationships, also indicates this mutuality of creativity.

When I started this project, I had hoped that Kristeva could help me weave Confucius and Foucault together, as she is concerned with the issues of both social relationships and individual creativity. To some degree, she bridges the two in terms of explicitly discussing how the self becomes creative through the relationality of the mother-child bond, the stranger within and without, and individual identity through loving relationships. However, such a bridge is fragile as she approaches the self's relationship with the other as built upon a sense of separation and division. Kristeva shares more common ground with Foucault in terms of attending to differences, and in a sense, is further away from Confucius' holistic self while she probes deeply into the psychic structure objectifying the subject. Foucault's philosophical analysis of self-

examination and self-mastery without essentialization and normalization, on the other hand, shares certain echoes from the Confucian traditions of self-reflection. While the Confucian emphasis on relationship is an antithesis to Foucault's centering on the self, this focus is also an antithesis to Kristeva's paradoxical self-other relationships. Needless to say, on the other hand, Kristeva's notion of creative womanhood is beyond both Foucault's and Confucius' reach and concern. Are they complementary to one another or they are heading in their own dispersed directions without much intersection? There is no single direction that one can take to go out, and while passages can be built among them, dead-ends are also evident, demanding detours. Indeed the human self is a labyrinth from which one cannot take easy flight. But as an ancient Chinese poem notes, when you believe you have reached a dead-end, another village is actually ahead of you. Go beyond dead-ends; another passage, another landscape is coming. Such a difficult journey is a labor we need to share with our students.

[More often than not, I feel myself in such an antithesis to American culture when I watch TV, at parties, in classes, at academic conferences, in American families. Or when I want to be quiet but am expected to speak, when I am feeling bad but need to say "I am fine," when I am embarrassed but supposed to say "thank you," when I stay in a big house alone but want some company. I can be bitter, too, as I watch how China is portrayed explicitly or implicitly as an enemy in this so-called post cold war age. (The United States could be constantly at war: not only at war with enemies, drugs, crime, but also at war with its own schools, its children's academic scores, and environmental issues.) However, why am I staying here? Can I say that differences can

be charming and strangeness can be refreshing, even antitheses can be illuminating? Youthful spirit. Laughter. Articulate brilliance. Energy. Expressive openness. I remain fascinated yet with a certain bitterness. I am learning, though, that the enemy is within the self too. When antithesis does not lead to war, I am searching for peace with my own stranger inside.]

The co-creation of the self and the universe is an important theme of Confucian selfhood that makes its unique contribution to rethinking the relationship between humanity and cosmos in this increasingly endangered ecological planet. Thomas Berry's (1988, 1990) call for us to listen to the earth, as he himself acknowledges, echoes a Confucian understanding of the trinity between humanity, earth, and heaven. As a self-claimed cosmopolitan attending to the particular, Kristeva (1995, 2000b) alludes to the possibility of desexualization in the sense of going beyond anthropomorphism. Her own ambivalence towards feminism is further articulated in her desire to go beyond sexual differences. While her post-feminist gesture--one must go through the feminist stage first--is bothersome to feminists, it catches the inherent paradoxes within Kristeva as she swings between the universal and the particular. She claims, "it is a matter of pushing the need for the universal *and* the need for singularity to the limit in each individual, making this simultaneous movement the source of both thought and language" (2000a, p. 19). To recognize sexual differences but no longer be constrained by them, what is this new spirituality, expected by Kristeva after feminist battles? Without a strong feminist posture based upon identity politics as defined by Westerners, can Chinese women follow another path, searching for more space to fulfill their lives? Would a Chinese holistic tradition of the cosmos be healing enough to lead

woman to find her own light? Is not "the dream of the earth" (Berry, 1990) also the dream of humanity taking an ecology of selfhood into consideration? However, on the other hand, can an ecology of selfhood without enough attention to differentiation of sexuality form an interactive dynamic? How can co-creation of self, other, and the universe be possible without sacrificing their respective independence?

[When in crisis, I often go to the university beach for free walks at night.

Walking bare-footed in the sand, looking up at the night sky, I am often touched and overwhelmed by the mysterious power of the universe. The moon with its tender light, stars with their blinking eyes, clouds with their fractal shapes, all pass me messages from nature in its beauty, complexity, and fluctuation. Looking around night-lights from surrounding houses, I almost can see smiles and tears, and hear sighs and

laughter, with their own rhythms flowing out of buildings into the ripples of the lake.

Embraced by the breeze from the lake, awed by inspiration from the stillness of the beach, I feel myself become a part of the night landscape and the night sky become a part of me. Every detail of the universe--a piece of green leaf, a tract of meadow, a bunch of wild flowers, or, a car passing by with its lights on--now, in my eyes, tells its own story about the omnipresent power of life, and unfolds mysterious interconnections within life. Wondering along the beach, I am also thinking, how can we as teachers open children's eyes and hearts to the power of the universe through the minutiae of life? And not be overwhelmed by this power to follow their own paths? Back to my apartment: daily routine with its tiredness, struggles, and pains, returns with its usual intensity. However, it is no longer over crushing; I fall asleep soundly to dream my dreams.]

While situating Chinese women in their own cultural tradition of holism and a social system in which men are also required to follow a certain hierarchical order, it might not be that difficult to understand why even women scholars, novelists, and intellectuals resist Western feminism (Yang, 1982; Zheng, 1996). However, as far as what I have experienced among Chinese women, either intellectuals or countryside farmers, their strength, courage, and brilliance cannot be overshadowed by their male counterparts. The inner strength of Chinese women, whenever it has a chance to show, can shock the world, if the world imagines them only as obedient daughters and wives. The inherent complexity and fluidity of Confucian traditions allows women to slip through the system, and as feminine and masculine are implicated within each other so are woman and man. Without the big gap between woman and man physically and psychically, as is assumed to be true in the West, and without an autonomous sense of being independent, the Oedipal identity with its dichotomy of father/man and mother/woman is problematic in the Chinese context.

The translation of feminism into Chinese is interesting for me as I notice how Chinese society and women shift their position in responding to this Western notion, as this notion in the West evolves itself. The first translation of feminism, as corresponding to Chinese directly, is female (女)--power (权)--ism (主义). In the 1990s, though, an alternative begins to appear: female (女)--sex (性)--ism (主义). I believe, the second translation, as a reflection of the shift from women's struggles for phallic power to women's efforts to fulfill their own sex or femininity, is more appealing to the Chinese mind. Actually we do not lack female models who obtain male power one way or another historically. After the 1949 liberation, under the official

campaign for the equality between man and woman, female models in almost every profession who are their male counterpart's equal--those strong-willed woman images--are everywhere for young Chinese women to follow. However, in this campaign for equality, woman's femininity is erased almost completely. Wearing the same clothes as men, women are praised for sacrificing their maternal responsibility to serve the state, just as men are promoted by their devotion to careers, neglecting their family responsibilities. Going through the trauma of effacing their own female self, would it not be more surprising if Chinese women embraced 女权主义 without any resistance?

Upon this consideration, Kristeva's discourse on the singularity of womanhood, the psychic fulfillment of motherhood, and the creativity of art can be appealing to Chinese women. What Chinese women must encounter, though, is those institutionally, culturally, and socially reinforced implicit gender biases behind the screen of official equality between men and women. Chinese women's issues are so often subsumed under the larger social issues of the class, the nation, and the people. However, women's own voices often fail to be heard within any grand theory. The current modernization movement, which both men and women eagerly join in, actually does not necessarily encourage women's own sense of the self; neither can a renewed search for the individual self provide such a space. Since the 1980s, there has appeared a strong call for individuality, but in literature this quest is predominantly reflected in the male individual's search for his masculinity (Lu, 1993). The complexity of the female self in contemporary Chinese society, in a mixture of old and new, tradition and reform, succession and creation, asks Chinese woman to rethink how to claim her own singularity yet at the same time engage in the social transformation of a great age. I

believe it is less of an issue that woman cannot be defined by language as Kristeva claims, but more of an issue to create a language that woman feels more comfortable in speaking. It requires a creative translation not only between Western language and Chinese ideographs but also between femininity and masculinity-- as much as both concepts are fictions. Such a translation is more complicated at the intersection of the multiple. Curriculum as an autobiographical and multilayered journey needs to be translated, too (Edgerton, 1996).

Am I arriving at any conclusion about the notion of the self? How can it be possible to settle a transformative and creative notion of self-in-relation, self-in-process, and self-in-alterity upon any fixed position free from conflicts? Without being able to do so, I have intended to tour you through the complicated web of the human self following interconnected yet fragmented curves to reach beyond predictable paths into unexpected landscapes. With a renewed understanding of the human self, I invite you to travel back to China with me to be engaged in curriculum as a journey home.

Notes

1. Perhaps not surprisingly, since my high school, the majority of my teachers have been men. Even in the field of education, at the time of my college education, male professors dominated the field. Upon reflection, I realize that almost all my influential professors in China were male: Oh well, I did not really have a choice. To channel and be channeled into a path that "fathers" take, no wonder I feel that I cannot be with myself.
2. Here is a double text again, as narrative of my experience and/or my thinking. Somehow I resist writing autobiographically dealing with psychoanalytic discourse. Perhaps I am bothered by the image of becoming an object of analysis. Stories or experiences are always richer and more complex than theoretical generalizations. Putting the human self as the object of analysis is quite different from the Chinese traditions of self-reflection. As I went to Beijing library in the Fall of 2000, trying to search for books on psychoanalysis, I could not help but feel disappointed that all the theoretical books at hand were general discussions and critiques of psychoanalysis with perhaps comparisons between Freud, Jung, Lacan, or even

Kristeva. However, I could not find any books on theoretical critiques of psychoanalysis from a cultural angle especially from Chinese culture. Does that indicate an acceptance of psychoanalysis as it is as a universal model in China? Or does that imply the almost irreducible conflicts between this universal model and the Chinese situation, which prevents scholars from making the link? Or is the introduction of psychoanalysis only at the preliminary stage in China? However the Chinese psychology field taking on psychoanalysis is beyond my speculation, but it cannot elude my own suspicion and doubt about the generalized model of psychoanalysis deeply rooted in Western languages and Western cultures. With all of this said, I am indeed trying to understand Kristeva, a psychoanalyst and a linguist. It is almost impossible to read psychoanalytic discourse without evoking personal response. I do not want to pretend to be neutral, but neither do I want to put my autobiographical writing completely under the gaze of psychoanalysis. I choose again to use double text. It also is intended to convey a sense of break as life flows through the text to disrupt its neat structure.

3. Understanding Kristeva's notion of the semiotic as unconscious, which is related to femininity and the maternal, I do not want to fall into an essentialist claim of femininity. Gender is historically and socially constructed, as Petra Munro (1998a, 1998b) and William Pinar (2001) point out. The Chinese tradition of man in woman and woman in man also asks me to approach the notion of "the stranger" in a complicated way. Especially situated in a concrete family life, "the stranger" could be a "she," could be a "he," and could be an implication of "she" in "he" or "he" in "she."
4. How the cosmic notion of *Tao* in Taoism and the moral principle of *Tao* in Confucianism interact with each other to shape the Chinese psyche is an issue I have not thought through. However, it certainly shows a different picture from that of the Western Oedipal. The close relationship between the psychoanalytic metaphors of maternal/paternal to mother/father is different from the Taoist understanding of *yin* and *yang* interacting with each other; although *yin* and *yang* are also related to femininity and masculinity, they are broader than that. Moreover, the Oedipal is based upon sexuality while *Tao* shifts as a cosmological energy permeates not only human relations but also (erotic) relations between humanity and the universe. Confucian *Tao* is based upon transference relations from the self, and family, into society and the cosmos. How to bridge the Oedipal and *Tao* so that independence and fluid interaction can form a constructive relationship to understand the human psyche anew is a project I might take on in my further research.

CHAPTER 6 CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF SELFHOOD: CURRICULUM IN A THIRD SPACE

A second trip back to China, my beloved homeland. When the plane is near Shanghai, I begin to feel excited. I left there four years ago. A city which has transformed my intellectual self and has taken a dreaming girl to another world, an exciting metropolitan city with its own mentality, Shanghai is going to show me another landscape. Lots of memories come back. Friends are there, teachers are there, colleagues are there, my youngest sister is there, so is my Chinese major professor.

This time, however, is not a quiet trip back. It is an academic trip. I am with my American major professor and his wife as their translator and assistant. Secretly I am worried about whether I can take up the task of translation in a broad sense-- cultural, educational, and personal translation--through a third space to be engaged with a transformative curriculum. Is a third space beyond "in-between" possible? Will I feel at home at all back in Shanghai? Will I come out reaching another level of the self in this journey of curriculum as self-creation? Will my travel through curriculum, which is to see landscape anew, help me to understand the self and the world more deeply? Carrying Foucault and Cixous' books, I am flying back to China.

Curriculum as a Transcendent Journey Home

Everyone experiences, and continues to have the possibility of experiencing the transcending of present forms of life, of finding that life is more than is presently known or lived. This is what education is about.

(Dwayne Huebner, 1999, p. 345)

I imagine our relation to curriculum as a moving through the homeplaces of our lives in order to translate them, in order that we may live on.

(Rebecca A. Martusewicz, 2001, p. 38)

I am checking in at the counter of a hotel in Shanghai. I am still in shock about how much Shanghai has changed within the four years since I left. The newly established Pudong International Airport, shaped like a bird on the shore of the sea, excited my first impression of a changing Shanghai with its own vitality and dynamics. Shanghai does live with its vision of everyday change. I cannot recognize many places with which I used to be familiar.

My Chinese major professor comes to the hotel to welcome us. According to him, a curriculum reform movement for more diversity and individuality is under way. Skeptical as I am, I hope that at least Chinese education can embrace social transformation rather than lagging behind the call for cultural change. A critical reflection of Chinese culture and Chinese identity--how to find an alternative (third) way to transform Chinese traditions without being fully Westernized--in contemporary China asks educators to re-think the central issue of education: curriculum theory (Zhong, 1989).

The call for personalized curriculum rather than a standardized national curriculum in China has become stronger and stronger in the last two decades. The emergent focus upon the individual person (Chen, 1988; Deng, 2000; Ding, 1989; Hu, 1989; Tu, 1996; Yun, 1993; Zhong, 1989, 1994, 1997; Zhang, 2000; Liu & Xiao, 1988), although having lived through its up and downs, calls for a balanced relation among individuality, collectivity, and sociality. Critical reflection upon education also makes scholars reclaim Chinese cultural traditions including Confucianism to re-build the path of personal cultivation. Curriculum as a journey in this age of social change and cultural fluidity in China cannot begin without the serious and critical encounter of

scholars with their own pasts and with the historical landscapes of the nation. A transcendent journey of curriculum, as Huebner (1999) shows, means a movement toward self-reflection and cultural transformation simultaneously for Chinese educators.

Situated in the shifting picture of Chinese society, transcendence can become immanent in the sense of co-creating the self and the universe. As Hall and Ames (1987) suggest, a Confucian universe is an immanent universe in which a transformative process of personal cultivation is situated. Huebner also implies this sense of co-creation when he defines the spiritual and the transcendent in a broad sense educationally: "The source of education is the presence of the transcendent in us and in our midst. We can transcend ourselves, go beyond ourselves, become what we are not, because we participate in the life which is transcendent and transcending" (1999, p. 360-61). His sense of beyond the self and his challenges to the taken-for-granted has resonance with Foucault's notion of a transgressive self. Huebner, though, is fully aware of the importance of building a community of patience, intimacy, and hope to support the difficult task of self-transcendence while Foucault's rupture with society is more complete. Negotiating between Confucian transformative continuity and Foucaultian creative rupture without re-establishing the binary of transcendence and imminence, co-creation and co-journeying, I believe, must be coupled with a questioning attitude to explore new grounds. A third (cultural) space becomes possible in such a negotiation through the mutual transformation of two different cultural and philosophical traditions to create a new notion of individuality based upon transformative relationships and interconnections.

I cannot imagine how teachers can engage in students' personal transformations without first reaching beyond themselves--culturally, socially, and personally.

Pedagogically speaking, Kristeva (1996) believes that the art of teaching is to "read the unknown that students [bring to the teacher]" instead of reading students as "looking for our own ideas" (p. 50). The invitation to call forth the unknown within students is also a call for teachers to go beyond the given into their own unknown. To become co-journeyers, teachers and students not only need to share knowledge but also need to share their lives in an "engaged pedagogy" (hooks, 1994a). Sharing is a process of reaching inside and outside simultaneously to meet the other. Students are our "other": Can we meet our students like meeting the stranger (Huebner, 1999)? This openness to students as the stranger, culturally speaking in a broad sense of being open to the other, is something a hierarchical Chinese society must encounter in order to transform itself in the direction of being more inclusive.

I am checking out in a supermarket. I ask the cashier politely: "Could you give me another plastic bag?" She ignores me. After several tries without any success, I suddenly realize that my non-Shanghai dialect sends her a signal that I am a non-local person, or possibly, an "immigrant" – a legal Shanghai-ese coming from another part of the country. A similar thing happened ten years ago in a store. Ten years. No longer a store, but a supermarket. The city has seen tremendous change and claims to be an international city--Can it really become an international city without changing the provincial mentality still manifested in every aspect of life? As an immigrant country, the United States has to re-think the issue of how to live with foreigners. As an international city, Shanghai has to confront its own arrogance before being truly open to

differences. As an individual, a transcendent spiritual journey is a soul-searching process, a breaking through to challenge our limits and narrow-mindedness. Curriculum as a transcendent process is constantly moving to go beyond the present to challenge cultural, political, and social norms including an authoritarian relationship between teacher and student. Such a journey of self-transformation through curriculum must be embedded in a critical attitude towards self and reality, or to use Foucault's phrase, a limit attitude.

Shanghai's Grand Theater looks splendid and magnificent during the night with all lights on. Appreciating its resplendence, and also the artful performance of the opera we have just watched, I cannot describe the complicated mood I am in. An opera highly anticipated by the public, a performance with the ambition of showing uniquely Chinese ethnic art through the combination of music, song, dancing, acrobatics, and martial arts, nevertheless presents three major female roles that are so stereotyped. This disappoints me. One is a cruel queen, another is a temptress, and the only positive major female role sacrifices her life for her lover--the wild zebra--in order that he can return to the wilderness. The traditional female role of self-sacrifice for love--a love supporting masculinity--is praised while the other roles of a female holding power either politically or sexually are rejected. This contemporary opera with the promise of opening a new page in the history of Chinese performance, however, leaves me untouched from the depth of my heart. The gendered biases shown in the opera must be transcended. To create a transformative relational individuality, we must challenge all kinds of hierarchical notions manifested in our culture and society.

The notion of transcendence asks us to deal with the problematic of home, especially if we think about the role of femininity. In Confucian traditions, which children leave home without returning, is not considered filial. The Foucaultian call for rupture with tradition asks for leaving home through a permanent critique. Kristeva, on the other hand, implicitly complicates this relationship between the self and the home in her understanding of the semiotic/maternal as a way to destabilize the symbolic/paternal. This valorizing of the semiotic calls upon us to return home with a new eye after achieving our separation. To some degree, this return is marked by an immanent transcendence echoed by the notion of co-creating both the self and the universe. Denying a certain sense of returning has an effect similar to staying at home all the time since the former is lost in a permanent wandering (of masculinity) while the latter is lost in an enclosed domestic boundary. I would argue for the reconciliation between or the embrace of both Confucian continuity and Foucaultian creativity through a Kristevian "mobile" home.

Pedagogically, Martusewicz (2001) argues for leaving home as a necessity for one's education. To risk leaving the security and comfort of home to journey together over the border into the other, teacher and student are translating between autobiography and curriculum to re-create text and imagine a better world. While appreciating Martusewicz's destabilized notion of home and an endless process of arrival and departure that leads students out into continuous adventure, I also want to argue for the importance of revisiting previous homes. The travel back is to seek passage through to another level--a level beyond the old home and the new home--which points to alternative directions for further journeying. The inter-textual nature of

education also asks the teacher and students to keep looping, a recursive return to previous texts, so that a transformative curriculum can be built through a matrix of interconnections, webbed with room for disconnection (Doll, 1993, 1998). Huebner (1999) returns to the Latin root of education to emphasize the educative process of leading out into new forms of life. This leading out is also intertwined with a leading in and a leading back while new meanings of life are created within so we can "come home in the text" (Doll, 1995) through understanding and writing.

Dr. Doll gives lectures to doctoral students in Shanghai on his post-modern perspective on curriculum. He always leaves time for me to conduct discussions with students in Chinese. I ask them not to think too much about the label of post-modernism, but to think more about the challenges that post-modernism brings to Chinese society and education, and the meaning of the deconstruction of the Western traditions to us Chinese in terms of questioning our own traditions, including pedagogical ones. With enthusiasm and open-mindedness, we struggle together with multilayered questions; we argue with each other; we seek passage through difficult channels. Impressed by the students' critical thinking and articulate openness, I am also surprised by my own ease in difficult translations across languages, education, and cultures. The change in me through an immersed engaging with the other re-orient my sense of self and home. I have not (only) a simple sense of feeling secure at home as embraced by my homeland's loving arms, but (also) an excitement of participating in building a new home. I feel grounded: another turning point in my life, this consciousness of self-transformation through leaving and returning home. This coming home at a distance yet feeling more comfortable with the self cannot be achieved

without an engaged encounter with the other or without a deep attachment to home. While Martusewicz argues that "detachment is at the heart of education" (2001, p. 34) and wonders how "one deals with the tension between home and nomadism" (p. 37), I believe a detached attachment which values both connections and critical ways of thinking makes curriculum a journey into both love and freedom.

According to psychoanalysis, a nomadic search is fruitless if one does not look within to understand what has been repressed and silenced. The self is constantly moving into the yet-to-be, which is not only oriented by a vision of the future but is also dependent upon an openness to suppressed "not"s. William Pinar (2001) regards this motion of the self as "autobiographies of alterity." For women who have been denied the self for so long, their attending to alterity is first of all to attend to the strangeness which has not been historically validated. When silenced whispers can be heard, invisible traces can be followed, denied connections can be rebuilt, erased her-tory can be re-told, and absent presence can re-emerge, the implication of the female self in the male other will be re-constructed and the implication of the male self in the female other can be re-thought. With the deepening of self-understanding, women educators will no longer accept the imposed task of serving father but begin to participate in envisioning a new world together with children, which embraces both feminine and masculine creative expressions. This journey into the creativity of womanhood is made possible by traveling through texts, new places, unfamiliar people, but the second (Kristevian) return home must follow departure so that women's inner voices can be heard. Therefore, the simultaneous movement through departure and return makes an emergent curriculum possible. Such an interaction between transcendence and home

paves the path to a self both fully grounded within and expanding more outside.

However, what do suffering and the pain of leaping into the unknown of the self and the world say to us pedagogically?

Homecoming : Child as Stranger and Curriculum as a Loving Encounter with Students

The moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others. That action is the testimony of love as the practice of freedom.

(bell hooks, 1994b, p. 250)

To save our children. The individuality of the child must be freed so s/he can be engaged in a lively, active, dynamic, and holistic process of development.

(Hu Keying, 1989, p. 19)

Ironically, I lose my passport in my hometown before we go to Beijing. I cannot fly anymore. However, the best thing about it is that after my American professor leaves, I can steal some time to play with my nephew, Mengmeng, who has been yelling for my company. A quick-tempered, unyielding but smart and sensitive nine-year-old child, his teacher's headache and pride (depending on the occasion), he has his own logic and seldom fails to argue his own point until adults use their privilege to overrule his argument, though secretly amused by his intelligence. We play with cards and then with a balloon. Almost from the very beginning I find out that he plays only for competition. He quickly changes the rules of the card game in order to beat me. Before I understand his rules, the game is over. After we switch to the balloon game, he aggressively tries to let the balloon fall on my side. I call it to his attention: "Hey, Mengmeng, we are playing!" He grimaces and plays the same. Is this what his upbringing teaches him? I am upset and begin to play according to his rules: he cannot beat me any more, but the game becomes short and boring. I ask him: "Mengmeng,

which is more fun, playing for enjoyment, or playing for winning?" He looks at me and thinks a little bit. He does not say anything, but the game is changed. During the process, with that lovely and understanding smile, he says after an unsuccessful attempt to keep the balloon flying: "Auntie, I did not want it to fall but it fell!"

Home is supposed to be a comfortable space for children to grow up, but it can be turned into a fighting place too. Traditionally, education is dear to the heart of the Chinese and they expect their children to become honorable persons. Intensified by the current one-child policy, the vulnerable shoulders of children are burdened with parents and grandparents' high expectations in an unprecedented way. Mengmeng is no exception. Though I have not come home often, I still witness how painful is the whole process of shaping him under the name of cultivating his nature. First is calligraphy, then is piano. He began his practice of calligraphy at the age of four. He gave it up after more than two years of practice, I suspect, as a protest, although he had already done a beautiful, beautiful job. He is only nine years old now, but he can read classical Chinese novels. For better or worse, the one he picks up and is particularly fond of is The Romance of Three Kingdoms, a novel describing the art of war in ancient China. The direct positive result of practicing calligraphy is to be able to recognize many Chinese characters. However, he was not left alone after he quit practicing calligraphy. Now he has been taken to learn how to play the piano while he fights for the time to read novels and watch cartoons on the television.

School can be worse than home, especially considering its institutional impersonalness. The metaphor of teacher as father or mother is not uncommon in Chinese tradition. The imposition of a parental mode of education is intensified by the

institutionalization of teacher-student authoritative relationships. Mengmeng is not a disciplined child, and my parents tell me stories about how he upsets his teachers or even makes them angry, and they in turn restrain him as strictly as possible. How can I blame him for his demanding and highly competitive manner thinking about what he goes through daily? What can he resort to, to dissolve his tears and frustration?

According to Tu Wei-ming (1993), suffering is part of self-cultivation in Confucian traditions. Tu also speaks about how a person's sensitivity and experiences of pain push the self to reach out for others, animals, plants, stones, planet and the cosmos with compassion and humanness. In Foucaultian self-creation, the death of certain layers of the self and a rupture with the past are necessary to mobilize a process of constantly remaking the self. The Kristevian subject, through alterity, is also situated in a process of living with suffering and pain to make creativity possible. Suffering is indeed part of human existence and stepping into the unknown requires the courage and strength to bear pain, but what bothers me is the unnecessary burden and universal norms we adults put upon young children's hearts, assuming we know better than they. My coming into the field of education was directly motivated by my sensitivity to the suffering and pain children have to endure at normalized schools starting with my elementary education. I firmly believe that without a willingness to endure the frustration caused by the child in the newness of his or her unbounded exploration, the teacher cannot interact with children in an educative way. Curriculum as a transcendent journey is first of all a process in which teachers go beyond their cultural and social imprints to challenge their own taken-for-granted ideas and beliefs while they are engaged in the transformation of their students. To some degree, the identity of the

young still in the process of emergence is more fluid and plastic than the already established identity of the teacher; therefore the teacher must be more courageous and willing to be self-reflective and critical.

Martusewicz (2001) speaks about a "pedagogy of suffering," which transforms suffering into social compassion against injustice and subsequently alleviates pain. Although it is impossible to end all pain and suffering, social change and self-creation are inherent in a mutual journey of both teacher and student to confront and transform their own positions, practices, and beliefs. This sense of mutuality becomes important pedagogically through a supportive and loving community in which "conflicts and anger, tears and pain, [and] unpredictable directions" must be endured and shared (Kohli, 1991, p.45).

There is indeed a tension within our notion and practice of love of our children: a tension between leaving them alone to reach wherever they want to go and engaging them in personal cultivation to go beyond themselves. In John Dewey's phrase, we need to find an alternative role for the teacher, "between forcing the child from without, or leaving him entirely alone" (Dewey, 1990/1902). Huebner (1999) asks us to acknowledge the student as the stranger who asks the teacher to respect his or her own unrealized potential. The call from critical Chinese scholars to make room in education to cultivate students' subjectivity, individuality, and creativity is to acknowledge the child as one who has his or her own world which needs to be respected. The metaphor of the stranger asks the teacher to listen more attentively to the child, to look more engagingly into the eyes of the child, and to perceive more insightfully the soul of the child, so that the novelty and creativity of the child can be affirmed and brought forth.

In the American classroom, despite the rhetoric of individual development, John Goodlad (1999) points out that all levels of schooling do not necessarily attend to individual students as persons, and what is absent from the picture of, especially, post elementary schools is students' own initiatives, creativity, and collaborative learning. In Chinese education, burdened by thousands of years of cultural traditions, breaking through the paradigm of knowledge transmission becomes more imperative and difficult. Social norms and cultural expectations increasingly implicated by media, technology, and the computer, explicitly or implicitly, pass on or even impose the world of adults on to children, without first questioning grown-ups' own complicity in keeping social stability or efficiency foremost, in the claim, "for the sake of our children."

While the Chinese curriculum is attempting to move away from national standards and tests to focus more upon the concreteness and uniqueness of individual students, the current American policy of using tests to push schools to achieve the American dream of maintaining national superiority sounds like a fantasy (Pinar, 1994). The child as the stranger, not as somebody to be assimilated into the adult's view of the world, is a vision we educators need to see. If we adults really open our eyes, ears, and hearts, my nephew Mengmeng, as any lively child can, may teach us many lessons, not only about childhood but also about new ways of understanding and interpreting life. The issue is not imposition of norms but living together.

As a loving encounter with the student, curriculum does not deny the existential human condition of suffering and the necessity of growth through transforming the frustration of confronting new knowledge and new relationships into a creative process of expanding the self to reach beyond. Neither does it ignore the importance of

challenging the student to limits that lead to new understanding and the creation of new layers of the self. However, such an encounter, to the extent that it is a loving relationship, must encourage students to carve out a space to move around by themselves. This freedom to explore new territories more often than not means a collision with the adults' world, which in turn challenges teachers and transforms curriculum into new directions. Love would be suffocating without freedom and freedom would be a lost hero/ine without love, as Kristeva suggests. Sympathy and compassion themselves cannot work magic without being grounded in a daring questioning attitude and a willingness to go over the border into new realms of life. Therefore a pedagogy of suffering is made possible by a simultaneous refusal and acceptance of pain in order to transcend, to come home for yet another time, to create a more humane world together. Such a homecoming becomes a journey since home is already transformed by one's loving encounter with new realms of knowledge and life. Hardly implying that teachers need to give themselves up to be merged with students, I suggest that the teacher work with students to transform the pain of growth into something productive while the teacher needs to accept the responsibility of guiding students through the process and journeying together with students to create new homes which host both love and freedom to reach into the unknown.

Speaking of norms and self, how can a curriculum based upon a future-oriented transformation of the past and its traditions be related to history and culture in a more generative way? Without renewing historical potential, can a creative curriculum be built out of nowhere? How can history and culture become a rich soil in which new generations can plant their own seeds and garden a new home? Is not a collective

reflection upon our past also an understanding of ourselves? Is not curriculum as a loving encounter with the child also a caring confrontation with our own history and culture?

Curriculum: A Historical and Cultural Journey

The path to moral training, the ideal of sagehood, the ideal of nobleman, if it intends to communicate with the contemporary world, must enter into a more thorough experience of living. We need to truly express our puzzlement about life, the shock from life, even the splitting of life deeply hidden in our hearts. (Yu Qiuyu, 2000, p. 158)

Curriculum understood as *currere* is a form of social psychoanalysis, a complicated conversation with myself and others, the point of which is movement: autobiographic, political, cultural.

(William Pinar, 2001, p. 2)

Today is heavy with tomorrow--
the future was planted yesterday.
Hope is a burden all of us shoulder
though we might stumble under the load.

(Shu Ting, 1991, p. 93)

Prof. Wang and Xu Yuzhen come to welcome me after I arrive in Beijing by overnight train. Yuzhen tells me later that Professor Wang is an expert on traditional Chinese thought. Not surprising to me. Beijing, a historical and cultural city: where else can I hear those lost voices besides here?

Culture, for radical Western scholars, more often than not, is regarded as something conservative. The role of intellectuals or artists is to disrupt the given culture and create something new. For Foucault, culture is more or less a background *against* which new visions of life can be imagined. In my Chinese mind, though, culture is intricately related to artistic/aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual realms of human life through its history, which embodies multilayered and contradictory symbols of both transcendence and transmission, both continuity and creativity. It can both

touch me profoundly and inspire me beyond my imagination while it can upset and suffocate me beyond what I can say. I do not think culture is inherently conservative, and cultural continuity through history with its endless break and repetitions can be sustained simultaneously with Foucaultian discontinuity. Burdened by five thousand years of history and culture, Chinese civilization yet survives and I truly believe there is something unique about its vitality, with its weaknesses of course, just like every culture. So comes my curriculum through an historical and inter/cultural journey.

I am sitting in the hotel to prepare a talk on contemporary curriculum theories and the Chinese cultural spirit for graduate students. In front of me is a small red box I got from a restaurant. There are two Chinese characters on it: affection for home. The big character--home--in its complicated stroke looks so dear to me. The small character--affection--is beside a teapot with steam coming out. On the table I also have a book on painting dragons. Incidentally, Cixous' Rootprint and Foucault's The Care of the Self are also there. What a mix! Precisely it is because of this mixture and contrast that I am able to see my own culture through a new angle. When I left China for the United States, I could hardly imagine I would take on the project of returning to Confucian personal cultivation for inspiration to re-think the human self. My very ability to appreciate the beauty of Chinese culture more than before, along with sharper critiques of my own tradition, is made possible by opening to another culture and my struggles with Western thinkers such as Foucault and Kristeva. My (loving) encounter with the other (culture) enables me to be reflective and critical of both self and other, and to search for a third space in which the two can interact in a creative way to make new layers of culture and self possible.

Both Tu Wei-ming and Yu Qiuyu (2000) argue for the collective hard work of struggling to regenerate Chinese traditions through critically reflecting on the already divided, multiplied, and fragmented self and culture. An historical break between traditions and modernization in China makes it imperative for scholars to be engaged in both critique and regeneration, searching for alternatives. Situated in the broad framework of cultural reflection and my personal journey of going between two different cultures, I ask myself: What questions can I ask to invite students to participate in this "intercivilizational dialogue" (Smith, 1999) and a "complicated conversation" (Pinar, et al., 1995) within the self?

As I guide my American guests in a tour of the Forbidden City, I notice that the image of double dragons playing with a pearl between them is almost everywhere, on the doors, windows, or walls of buildings. It is not only part of ancient Chinese buildings, but also part of folk art such as dragon-dancing. We had one king--the embodiment of the dragon--but we often have two dragons playing with each other in art and folk tales. In the hotel room I am thinking about questions I would like to ask the Chinese students: Which part of tradition would you like to bring to life in your own classroom? One lonely stern king or two playful companioning dragons?

Psychologically speaking, one dragon could be the other (hidden) part of the one manifest through the double to play with each other (Donna Trueit, personal conversation), yet is not the very transmutation of one into two more fascinating (*Tao* as one also moves through the interaction of two: *yin* and *yang*)? What does the myth and the image of a dragon made out of different animals' parts mean to becoming an open-minded educator in contemporary China? Can we follow the winding course of

embracing the multiple and the different as descendents of the dragon or do we only look upon one authority to constrain ourselves on one path towards one goal? As the descendents of the dragon, how should we approach the other such as Western culture? These questions are not only historical, cultural questions but also personal questions, asking students to rethink their identity as teachers and as Chinese.

Chinese educators are struggling with the question of how to bring multiplicity, individuality, and differences into the classroom. Not only because of political control but also because of cultural traditions, Chinese scholars approach the issue of individuality with a certain caution. I believe for good reasons. To enter into the Western ideal of individualism is what these scholars are against, while they vigorously attack the homogeneous collectivism intensified in schooling, education, and curriculum. More often than not, they are trying to explore how to achieve a certain balance--in Confucian tradition, it is termed "harmony" or "mean"--between singularity and interconnections.

Culturally speaking, to negate Chinese traditions of connections and relationships cannot really "save our children." I believe cultural transformation can never be achieved through a complete break. The break between Chinese traditions and contemporary China leaves Chinese intellectuals and scholars to struggle with divisions and a fragmentation of the Chinese self. Such a fragmented self wandering through the co-existence of cultural continuity and cultural transformation can both embrace its invisible origins and pave new ways of becoming only if the revolutionary ideal of changing everything overnight can be reflected at a deep level of culture and history. The issue is how to create something new from continuity in order to make

transformation possible. Culture and history as critique (Joseph, 2000) become important here.

In the American curriculum field, cultural studies are emerging as an important school for understanding curriculum. While a general "cultural history-based understanding of schooling" (Popkewitz, 2001, p. xii.) is explored, the efforts to read, view, and see popular culture as critical pedagogy (Daspit & Weaver, 1999) approach curriculum and culture through particular angles. Both creative potential and technology-mediated homogeneity are acknowledged in these studies, which ask educators to journey through culture in both an engaged and reflective way. Working on the border between autobiography and cultural studies, Susan Edgerton (1996) intends to translate the curriculum by "gaining insight into *self* and *other*, how I construct who the *other* is, how I am constructed as the *other*, and how a sense of place is itself built on notions of the *other*"(p. 134; emphasis in original). The inter/subjective, inter/textual (along with literary readings), inter (intra)/cultural nature of understanding curriculum not only mobilizes any notion of the self but also situates the self in a complicated web of interconnections and intra-connections bordering on the edge of openness to the other.

Curriculum as *currere*, through a cultural and historical journey, tells us untold stories. Pinar (2001) traces the birth of the United States as a nation and how the notion of "self-made" men (specifically, masculinity) structures that "peculiar" (Pinar prefers "queer") institution of "race." In this sense, curriculum as a cultural journey implies an intra/intercultural exchange, which also permeates the individual self, the self inevitably gendered. The return of the repressed memory and the unconscious other becomes

important to destabilize a frozen sense of the self. Such an opening to "difficult knowledge" (Britzman, 1998) requires the hard work of memory. Through engendering curriculum history in "the ongoing memory work which must be done" (Munro, 1998b, p. 285), Petra Munro deconstructs the patriarchal notion of origin, linear progress, a unitary subject and asks us to re-think how the complexity of narrative contests curricular gendered boundaries. In other words, the gendered nature of culture and history, through a curricular journey, can be understood only if we work through a difficult and painful memory.

As I travel along, I am fully aware of "the significance of place" (Kinchelov & Pinar, 1991) in my life, not only personally but also culturally and historically, or in a more accurate sense, both personally and socially in a very simultaneous and intertwined way. Beijing is a city where modern radical cultural and political movements erupt, although still burdened with its long history of being a self-closed kingdom. Traveling through it means both a continuous fascination and a possible breaking through. As Pinar (1991) elaborates the racial, gender, and class layers of the South to re-envision Southern studies as a way of introducing students to themes of history, place, memory, and the self, I am particularly drawn to the gendered aspect of social psychology as it is conspicuously absent in the Chinese curriculum. The shifting positions of woman through movements in the landscape must be re-drawn and re-envisioned. With a new consciousness of curriculum as *currere*, my tour of land and place is inevitably gendered.

A Tour of Landscape through Curriculum: Shifting Positions of Wo/man

In continually becoming, in naming and renaming, in moving back and forth into the margins, women actively subvert and decentralize dominant relationships. Resistance becomes a never-ending dance in these spaces of contradiction. . . . Resistance is not an "act" but a movement, a continual displacement of others' attempts to name our realities. (Petra Munro, 1998a, p. 125)

I do not quite believe in male power; somehow the iron of patriarchy didn't enter into my soul... Above all, perhaps, we need a sense of people's complexity of relationship to the historical situations they inherit. (Carolyn Steedman, 1997, p. 19)

Guilin is a beautiful city, not too much contaminated by industry. The Li River is still crystal clear. The multiple peaks of mountains stretching continuously, connecting with each other along the river, fascinate me. When we tour on the boat through the river, I can see women washing clothes on the bank, a fisherman hiding in a hole of a rock to fish using a long bamboo pole, or a small boat rocking in its own rhythm.

In Chinese landscape paintings, especially mountain and water paintings, readers can almost always feel the traces of humanity, either an empty boat lying at anchor, a lonely house hidden in the depth of a mountain, a vague bridge above the river stretching into the distance, or several human figures sketched in the picture. Boat, house, bridge, and human figures are usually small, only occupying a corner of the painting. This sense of humanity in the picture but not dominating, I believe, to some degree shows the Chinese vision of harmony between humanity and nature. The idea of humans being part of the land rather than being controllers of the land is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. Human sketches are vague and small: it is hard to tell whether the figure is a man or a woman.

Western landscapes perhaps show a different picture, not in terms of paintings but in terms of the relation between land and humanity. In American culture, the venture into the wilderness or the West is traditionally depicted in a controlling manner as man's heroic expansion. As Pinar (2001) argues, the founding of the American nation through the frontier mentality of the self-made man leads to the hegemony of racialized hypermasculinity. Interestingly, this myth of the self-made man is also deconstructed from another angle by woman's rethinking about self and land. Quite contrary to the common image of a brave man thrusting into the wilderness, Kate Winter (1989) argues that man has a profound uneasiness with the wilderness since "the possibility of moral and/or mental degeneration lurks behind the promise of freedom from cultural constraints" (p. 4). Woman, on the other hand, through intimately connecting to the land, gets in touch with her potential, talents, and vitality, forming unity with creation. Not overcoming the land as a male hunter does, woman dwells in the land and transforms herself *with* the land not *over* the land. The central position of man in the landscape of humanity is directly challenged here and woman comes into the picture but her image shifts through the curve of the land. Women's sense of connection with the land echoes the Chinese notion of harmony between humanity and the universe. However, this relational view inherent in Chinese culture, which challenges the Western myth of masculinity, does not necessarily guard against sexism in China.

The modest position of the Chinese image of man in the land acknowledges the interactive relationship between humanity and nature, but ironically, this harmonious view of nature and life co-exists with the inhumanity of footbinding and is even used to justify confining woman's "nature." This horrific crime against woman has not pushed

her out of the picture: She is still in the process of standing up to move in the land. Yet implicit and explicit discriminations are still manifest in her daily life, even starting from an early school age.

We are at a school to observe an English class. They are using New Concept English--a textbook designed by British scholars for foreigners to learn English. We are, incidentally, in a dialogue in which girls are invited to play (only) hopscotch and boys are invited to play (only) football. Gender biases are obvious without being noticed by the young teacher. This landscaping of female and male in certain ways without questioning its stereotypes is not so uncommon in our textbooks (including Chinese textbooks and imported textbooks), and especially in an implicit way. As educators, when we do not consciously re-landscape the picture of the self and the world, exploring new ways of drawing pictures of human life, we not only fail our children but also fail ourselves in our own efforts at self-understanding and self-transformation.

In Landscape for a Good Woman, Carolyn Steedman (1997) asks: "Where is the place that you move into the landscape and can see yourself?" Working on the intersection of gender, class, and exiling immigrant, Steedman questions the central story of the middle-class landscape of a powerful father, a loving mother, and the child (girl) triumphantly identified with the law. The landscape seen from "the curtainless windows of a terraced house" (p. 2) is essentially different from what the central position can show, that stretching view looking down from a big house. Re-landscaping the gendered self, re-telling those secret and impossible stories, I believe, cannot be done merely by recognizing the repressed, but the whole picture must be mobilized, as

almost every individual hardly fits into the norm. When the positions of woman and man, with her and his own racial, class, ethnic, cultural, and sexual identities, are no longer fixed at certain points, or absent in the picture, and instead are present throughout the scenery by rich and delicate strokes, the landscape itself will keep shifting and changing. In this way, the stranger comes and goes, a stranger whose vibrant calling continuously echoes, shaking mountains and reverberating in valleys, to enrich and transform the landscape, to make it more humane yet simultaneously more ecological. Unfortunately, our school curriculum stays fixed and tells only one dominant story, effacing the concreteness and particularity of different forms of human life. Now it is time for woman to enter the landscape to tell her own story and make her own interpretation.

Women's entrance into the picture does not mean a simple replacement of men's positions. What is more important and more difficult is to challenge the fixed gendered structure itself and in turn to destabilize both women and men's movement in the landscape. As gender is a socially and historically constructed concept, so is the notion of woman. The fluidity of woman needs to be acknowledged as she negotiates the difficult passage through which she moves in the picture, disrupting the central position of men while at the same time refusing to stay fixed in any stable place. Women teachers' stories as re-told by Petra Munro (1998a) show how they resist the resistance theory which assumes a unitary and stable revolutionary self. These teachers choose to displace social norms instead of simply reversing gender roles. By refusing either to adopt a masculine posture of autonomy or to submit to social expectations, these women work on the boundary to subvert gender tales. Such a complicated space in

which woman negotiates contradictions and multiplicity indicates a gendered subjectivity which is in flux and movement, constantly naming herself yet refusing to be confined within any border. As boundary-subject, as Kristeva shows, woman is situated in a third space which embraces both femininity and masculinity through a creative interaction to open new possibilities of human life.

Such a shifting position of woman disrupts both the patriarchal landscape and the emancipatory subject that is still implicated in masculine-dominated subjectivity. The coming and going of the stranger through the landscape requires the reshaping of our curriculum in such a way that femininity is not rejected but accompanies our children into educational realms. Kristeva's call to bring bodily experiences, passions, desires, and maternal relationships back to language becomes imperative here. When the central position of masculinity in language is displaced, words no longer play an exclusive role of separation but nurture to open a more creative continent incorporating both femininity and masculinity. Helping the child negotiate between maternal semiotic aspects and paternal symbolic aspects of language, the teacher becomes the third party that Kristeva firmly upholds as necessary to guide the child through the healthy individualizing process of becoming a subject. As a negotiator between both realms, who leads the child into his/her own negotiation, the teacher needs to re-position herself. Keeping nourishing relationships alive but not merging with mother and refusing the tyranny of the symbolic but participating in its transformation, women teachers are situated in a third space where they can move through passages and beyond borders to create new subjectivities.

Working at the intersection of language arts, autobiography, and feminism, and exploring what the Kristevian subject can offer, Wendy Atwell-Vasey (1998a) addresses "the need to nourish the speaking, reading, and writing student as a subject who [is] brought to reality and language by others through love" (p. 8). This need for bringing nourishing words back to schools from their exile in standards, formulas, and (masculine) grammar structures, Atwell-Vasey (1998b) believes, not only requires the teacher's love in affirming the child's own needs but also requires the teacher to open a window for the child to look out into the external world. In other words, nourishing words are meaningful only when they are connected to the outside world, and the return of the stranger is creative only if not positioned at a fixed point. When words are understood not in a literal sense, but in the broad sense of people, world, and texts, the implications of curriculum through nourishing words are not confined to language teaching, but include every subject including science (Gough, 1998), which is traditionally male-oriented towards objectivity and control.

The positioning of schoolgirls as diligent, hard-working, and passive, yet still achieving less than naughty, playful, and active schoolboys, as Valerie Walkerdine (1990) points out, is a fiction, a sexualized fantasy, but daily played out in schools. I have learned to turn away from compliments, with suspicion, almost all kinds of compliments, because I become aware how the image of me in others' eyes is not an "I" perceived by myself, yet could become a part of me I could not really resist. The construction of femininity and masculinity through fantasy, unfortunately, does influence girls and women's images of themselves which many of us counteract vigorously though not necessarily successfully. One of my friends told me I was the

only Chinese who said she was smart. I was so astonished: she is not only smart, but certainly brilliant and does not fit the picture of a good girl at all. It does not matter what kind of person she is, though; what matters is that she is a woman. I certainly do not want to believe in any gender myth, yet the myth nevertheless sneaks into my mind, casting doubts upon my own intelligence. Ironically teachers or even professors in China who downplayed my intellectual ability were, more often than not, females, while it was my male professors who implied that I had an intellectual potential to carve out. The irony of being both a woman and a teacher--A good girl herself at school but somehow hating to be that good is quite ambivalent towards her female students (Walkerdine, 1998). With the difficulty of unburdening gender baggage, I wonder how women sustain their confidence throughout their own journey into the world. Perhaps an "into" of the world will not do any good; a journey *with* the world might lead to a new-landscaping of the gendered picture.

To counteract gendered biases is an unfinished project of simultaneously constantly pushing boundaries and continually coming back to both challenge and nurture the self. To refuse any naming imposed on us as women, we need to name ourselves while at the same time questioning the very practice of naming itself. Woman's fluid movement on the border makes her adopt a double gesture toward both loving students and teaching students to reach beyond. Situated in a third space to embrace *aporia*, she re-landscapes the gendered picture of reality and travels through invisible tunnels coming out for the light. To undertake such a difficult task, women need their own supportive network. To expand and transform the traditional view of "team teaching," women teachers' own collaboration--which is problematic, as Munro

(1998b) points out--with women scholars and pro-feminist theorists is necessary to transform teaching, curriculum, and theorizing, which is still very much male-dominated. Madeleine Grumet (1988) asks us to refurnish an established (patriarchal) house with the visions of women educators, which cannot be accomplished without a collective "us."

How can we reach a space where gendered differences can be in a play with different positions of woman, shifting yet creative? How can we picture an educational landscape that makes present the invisibility of femininity? If reason and rationality fail us, can we venture into a realm of imagination, play, and creation?

Imagination, Play, and Creativity: Curriculum as Performance

It is imagination--with its capacity to both make order out of chaos and open experience to the mysterious and the strange--that moves us to go in quest, to journey where we have never been.

(Maxine Greene, 1995, p. 23)

All encounter with the language of art is an encounter with an unfinished event and is itself part of this event.

(Gadamer, 1998/1975, p.99)

Upon my request, Liuzhen accompanies me back to Nanjing to visit Nanjing-Hopkins Center--a bilingual cultural center jointly operated by Nanjing University and Johns Hopkins University. I stayed there one year, a year which profoundly changed my life. The Chancellor of Johns Hopkins University is visiting and even as alumni we are not allowed to come into the Center. Sneaking in, we go directly to that small pond located in the central place surrounded by classrooms, dormitories, and offices.

Sitting leisurely on the stone in the middle of the pond, we talk and watch fish in red, black, gray, and multiple colors play with each other. The fish captures me for quite a while. Perhaps my one-year life in Nanjing can be characterized as "play."

Playing with different ideas, different styles of teaching and learning, different ways of making friends and living a life, I also played around many cultural and historical sites in the area of, or beyond, Nanjing. I still remember the profound fascination with and fondness for Chinese art in my Australian-Chinese friend's eyes as we toured through different cities. She even attempted to write stories in Chinese. She wanted to become a writer. I read some, beautifully written. Didn't she return to the land with the immersion and engagement she longed for give her inspiration that overcome the beginning awkwardness of her Chinese language (and the disillusion with an idealized homeland, as I mentioned in chapter 5)? A traveler, she now tours Europe, Asia, and America, never settling down. Every time, I greet her in cards and letters: How did you play around? Actually meaningful play is hard work. Without the hard work of imagination, play probably can amuse but does not inspire.

The sense of playfulness does not exist in Chinese schools. Our intellectual traditions are too serious and do not leave much room for children to play. It surprises me though that meaningful play is also absent in American schools. In my fantasy, schools are places for American children to play, just as parents dropping off their children at school usually say, "have fun." In comparison, Chinese parents say "Study well. Be good." The figure of Dewey is so rooted in Chinese educators' imagination that experientially based pedagogy is taken for granted to happen in American classrooms. William Doll (2002) contests this image by depicting Dewey as a ghost hovering over the American curriculum. According to Doll, Dewey is misunderstood when schooling stays at the level of hands-on experiences without reaching the level of intellectual reflection. Reflective thinking is the key to making play meaningful. Doll

also argues that the connection between the concrete world of the child and the abstract world of the subject can be made through playing with patterns within the subject and with the spirit of the subject to expand the world of the child. The mental activities of play when both emotionally charged and intellectually engaged in transform both the child and the curriculum by connecting differences in an imaginative and creative way. Play with differences and ambivalence does not intend merely to make learning interesting, but it also attempts to touch upon new ground, to experiment with new ideas, and to reconstruct the world in a different way.

To speak of creating a curriculum for and through imagination, Maxine Greene (1995) calls powerfully for "releasing the imagination." Confronting the discussion about standards, assessment, test scores, accountability, and procedures, Greene asks us to think about what is behind these demands. Her critique of the current push for standardization is echoed in Doll's (2001b) historical analysis of curriculum as method and Pinar's (1994) questioning of whether the corporate model serves productivity. To break the siege of the taken-for-granted and the given, Greene believes that imagination can take us to a journey of venturing out into the unknown, exploring alternatives, and expanding our capacity to search for the yet-to-be. An alternative landscape of the aesthetic, the narrative, the spirit of questioning, and the willingness to become different is opened through imagination. Students' encounters with the arts (such as literature, painting, music, film, dancing, and sculpture) become important in their awakening from the everydayness, their new awareness of life, and their embracing the spirit of creativity. Greene also emphasizes that social imagination enables community members to engage in a conversation across different voices and join in a communion

out of multiplicity. In this way, community becomes a verb, a communal process of making and creating in movement.

According to Gadamer, there is always an element of surprise in experience, which is intensified in aesthetic experience. Such an element of the unexpected, the unpredictable, and the eventful is what is missing in our classrooms, which are dominated by either slack hands-on activities or controlled procedures. To infuse spontaneity, surprise, and excitement into our curriculum, we need to teach in an aesthetic way, to be engaged in a movement from the familiar to the strange, which in turn brings the strangeness back within the self to carve out a creative space. This strangeness both outside of and inside of the self is a storehouse for new possibilities. Openness to the stranger asks us to go beyond the logical, the rational, and the procedural into the imaginative, the aesthetic, and the unexpected. Releasing imagination, at the same time, brings us back to reality to participate in reconstructing the world through visiting "other worlds, returning to this one to call others to futures more life affirmative than the world we inhabit now" (Pinar, 1994, p. 246). An aesthetic way of teaching is not confined within the realm of informed art experiences, but can be infused into every subject. In Art and Education, Dewey (1934) suggests that everyday experience can be transformed into *an experience* which inherently has an aesthetic quality. Such a transformation brings the imaginative across different subjects. When we cultivate imagination at the heart of education, curriculum can be freer from the language of the technical and the standard to flow into the rhythm of life or fly onto the mystery of the unknown.

Such a journey into the imaginative realm is accompanied by our journey into the unknown within ourselves. Madeleine Grumet (1976, 1988) stages curriculum as theater in order that performance can complement autobiography to make students aware of their own possibilities, possibilities which would be otherwise hidden from the everyday, the routine, and the familiar. She believes both autobiography and theater through *currere* disclose as well as renew teachers' and students' educational experiences by the combination of postreflection and prereflection. Images, gestures, and bodily movements, combined with words, lead students to not only experience what has been repressed but also transform the way they look at the self and the world through articulation and expression. Such an intensified experience of both body and mind, such an encounter with the stranger within, creates passages between, gives new meanings to the text, and deepens understandings of the self.

Curriculum as performance through imaginative literature, theatre, play, dance and other forms of art is a journey, a journey of autobiographical reflection and envisioning, which calls for releasing human potential by creating engaged and creative pedagogy to go beyond the routine method of reason, logic, and rationality. It is a journey of anticipation and surprise, folding out and folding back, leading inside and leaping outside, a journey of playing with the stranger, with differences, and with new possibilities. Imagination is a bridge to connect different worlds, a connection which leads teacher and student to journey through a third space in which interconnected paths among multiplicity are created to curve around new landscapes of self.

Harmony in Differences, Creating the Dragon through Multiplicity and Curriculum through Polyphonic Symphony

As educators in an increasingly diverse and complex world, isn't it our responsibility then NOT to simplify, to neutralize, or to translate curricula materials into a transparent medium? Isn't it NOT to eliminate or exclude complex or controversial elements of the curriculum, but on the contrary, to make sure that they ARE part and parcel of education, and that students develop the necessary skills to understand and analyze such material? (Denise Egea-Kuehne, 1996, p. 157)

Hangzhou and Suzhou are historically called "paradise in the world." Hangzhou is famous for its landscape and silk while Suzhou is particularly famous for its gardens. My re-visiting of these gardens--with the help of my American professor's excitement about finding his favorite metaphor of education everywhere: fractal--brings me a new eye to look at what I have been familiar with: "Every meeting a first encounter" (Bei, 1991, p. 11). One theme particularly striking for me is the sense of harmony in differences in Chinese aesthetics. The discourses about differences in the United States, especially in poststructuralism and post-modernism, do not have any strong sense of harmony; the theme of struggle through contradictions is dominant. As I tour Chinese gardens everywhere, I am surprised by the patterns of architecture, detailed in the designs and shapes of windows and doors, which never repeat themselves yet achieve an aesthetically pleasing form of balance and harmony. The notion of harmony occupies a very important position in Chinese philosophy. Still the aesthetic forms of difference, in their deviance from the homogenizing forms of political control, signal the critical posture of art.

The multiplicity of landscapes is also implied in clever designs in all kinds of doors within the garden. As you are located in different positions, outside the door or inside the door, at the right, the left, or the central angle of viewing on the same side of

the door, what shows before your eyes is different. When multiple doors in different shapes are deliberately designed to form landscapes through space within space, complicated networks of scenery suddenly appear. Through those magic windows, you can peek into another world. Rockeries, water, and buildings are scattered with the spreading out of paths, trees, flowers, and grass, with an intricate combination of both density and looseness: "so sparse as to let a horse walk, so dense as not to let a breeze in." The design of layer upon layer creating scenery brings out a sense of infinity within a finite boundary. Within a limited space, a small garden can give you a view so multilayered and dynamic that the spirit of nature and the universe can flow through humanity to embrace differences, diversity, and harmony.

The sense of the many in the one actually can be traced back to the myth of the dragon. As Wang Dong (2000) tries to argue, the dragon does not (merely) symbolize religious worship but is a cultural creation. The dragon is still part of Chinese life; we usually term ourselves as descendents of the dragon. Wang further argues that the ideal of dragon is intimately related to the Chinese cultural spirit, including the unity between humanity and the universe, harmonious relationships between self and other and among groups, tolerance of cultural diversity, interaction between *yin* and *yang*, and the creative integration of antithesis and contradictions. In other words, the dragon is the symbol of harmony in differences. The shape of the dragon itself is already fascinating: a dragon is composed of--according to one common saying (Song, 1999)--the head of an ox, the mouth of a lion, the moustache of sheep, the feelers of a shrimp, the horn of a deer, the mane of a horse, the body of a snake, and the tail of a fish. The image of the dragon has been shown in almost all realms of Chinese art in its various forms of

movement, twisting, curves, and playfulness. We also have a folk tale of the dragon giving birth to nine sons, none of whom is in the shape of the dragon but has its own symbolic meaning, which can be seen on stone monuments, on the ridges of roofs in architecture, on the knobs of the bell (a musical instrument in ancient China), the wrists of vessels, the heads of bridges, the handles of swords, and the knockers of doors. The richness of the dragon myths is beyond my exploration here, yet the refreshing and creative potential in this ancient prototype fascinates me as my second homecoming continuously gives me inspiration to re-think culture, self, and curriculum.

The notion of harmony in Chinese aesthetics, as I understand it, is not towards conformity but towards the dynamics that are set into motion by differences and multiplicity shifting in a network of creative imagination. Under the brush of artists and craftsmen, what makes the landscape harmonious is what sets it into movement rather than what makes it uniform or common. An aesthetically pleasing form, more often than not, is not an individual object, but is situated in a complicated network of artistically re-arranged space, place, objects, paths, nature, and humanity. The art of gardening in Shuzhou, according to Jin Xuezhi (1999), brings the aesthetics of painting, calligraphy, music, historical stories, and literary legends into gardens to form an integrated artistic realm. The inner harmony within gardens is expanded into the outside to mingle with the bigger space. Borrowing buildings outside the wall, the Zhuozheng garden leaves a space to show the North Temple Pagoda whose shadow ripples in the garden's pond. Borrowing mountains, several gardens have pavilions to look far into the hills in the distance. Borrowing water, Canglang Ting is open to an outside river and an outside bridge with kiosks looking down to the water. Such an arrangement of

gardens outside gardens (and also gardens within gardens) directly challenges any rigid distinction between inside and outside, inner and outer, and boundary and fluidity. Such a blending between inner and outer also echoes a Confucian sense of the self which cultivates itself within while expanding outside: a so called "inner sageliness and outer kingliness." The multiplicity of space arrangements, the movement of the layout, and the intricate relationships among every part of a garden, all set off the dynamics of harmony which makes a poetic creation possible through shifting interconnections.

Although harmony in differences in Chinese aesthetics itself is a creative act, I am suspicious about how differences play out in the layout of harmony: To what degree can multiplicity and dissonance be allowed not to fit into the whole picture? To what degree are unmerged breaks and discontinuity encouraged to move the unity of differences in unexpected directions? To what degree, as multiple and shifting as it is, can harmony resist closure and boundary? As creative and dynamic as it can be, the theme of harmony indicates a certain merging towards an overall form of beauty.

Mikhail Bakhtin (1979) also talks about unity, a unity understood not as a totalizing converged force, "not as an innate one-and-only, but as a dialogic *concordance* of unmerged twos or multiples" (Quoted in Morson & Emerson, 1990, p.1). This echoes the Chinese tradition of living with tensions and multiplicity in harmony to a certain degree, but Bakhtin's notion of polyphony, as a new form of art, a new way of understanding, emphasizes more the role of heterogeneity, uncertainty, and openness to alterity in promoting nonconsensual dialogues across differences. A polyphonic dialogue between (and within) self and other in a relationship of simultaneity in difference (Bakhtin, 1993) allows a space for disagreement both within the self and with

the other, unfinalizability of emergence and becoming, and unending engagement with change. Here conflicts, disharmony, and dissonant voices become generative rather than something which must be harmonized.

Re-thinking "curriculum as polyphonic co-authoring of selfhood" (Wang, 1997), I attempt to bring both harmony in differences and polyphony in unity into curriculum to embark on a journey of writing new narratives of self in a Kristevian paradoxical community. Writing, as Foucault acknowledges, is an important path to self-creation. When conducted in such a way that story-telling reaches within and back to personal and cultural history and envisions a personal and cultural transformation, narrative becomes a significant channel for both teacher and student to engage in a process of making new meanings together. As long as community can be paradoxical, dissonant voices are welcomed and disharmony can be woven *with* unity instead of *within* unity. However, as Greene (1995) reminds us, we cannot give up our responsibility to search for common grounds to create a democratic classroom in which dialogue enriches members of the community instead of dividing or separating them. In other words, harmony in differences is also needed to promote the explorations of the teacher and student in a tolerant and inclusive atmosphere. Needless to say, in such a vision of curriculum, the pre-determined procedure is challenged and curriculum itself keeps emerging and shifting (Doll, 1993) as a result of the co-creative process through the lived experience of each participant. As Denise Egea-Kuehne (1996) points out, more often than not, the neutrality of the curriculum is assumed and consensus is pursued in teaching. As a result, the teacher is expected to "neutralize" teaching to make

"everything understandable to all" (p. 159). However, without openness to the other, how can students be educated to reach beyond themselves?

To turn dissonance into a productive instead of disruptive site, intellectual guidance and emotional support from the teacher, with the support of an inclusive community, becomes crucial. With communal support, students are not afraid of mistakes or dead-ends, of journeying into new territories; neither are teachers. To deal with what Marla Morris (1996) calls "shut-down moments," I believe that nurturing this silence is probably more productive than confronting students directly to push them to understand what they are currently resisting. The role of the teacher in a polyphonic co-authoring of selfhood is ambiguous, as the teacher needs to come along with students while at the same time must resist this coming along. Participation and guidance are both important. Success is highly dependent upon the teacher's own ability to dwell in a space of ambiguity and her or his capacity for "dialogic intuition" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 61) to perceive students' inner conflicts and lead them to outgrow themselves. Utilizing Foucaultian feminist analysis, Gore (1993) believes that there is no universal model of the teacher/student relationship and the teacher's response to the student, if successful, must be contextualized and situated. The art of being a teacher, especially a woman teacher, lies in her ability to dwell in a space of both nurturing and guidance. A third space indeed.

Whether emphasizing harmony in difference or polyphony in unity, curriculum, through Confucian harmony, Kristevian polyvalence, and Foucaultian self-creation meanders its way through a kaleidoscopic landscape into the distance, with the promise of surprise, the unpredictable, and the unknown.

Curriculum in a Third Space

A transformative curriculum, then, is one that allows for, encourages, and develops this natural capacity for complex organization; and through the process of transformation the curriculum continually regenerates itself and those involved with it. (William Doll, 1993, p. 87)

Separated from her, separated from each other, women in education have withheld recognition from our mothers and from each other. And in that isolation not only have we relinquished the middle ground, that relational ambivalent place of our own histories, we have relinquished schooling as a middle ground as well. (Madeleine Grumet, 1988, p. 192)

Tao gives birth to one
One gives birth to two
Two gives birth to three
Three gives birth to universe
(Lao Zi)

Baton Rouge. Back again. The very second day after our arrival, we have a party in a professor's house: the same place I went to when I first came here feeling quite lost among strangers (Wang, 2002). These strangers have become mentors who "lead me out," and friends who "lead me back within." No longer feeling lost, I move among them much more comfortably. Yet still not quite fitting into the picture, but with more ease, I begin to be comfortable with not fitting in. I have never felt that I really fit in, even back at home in China. No longer being obliged to come along, I am relieved to just be at home even when I am out of here somehow. My profound sense of being alone has led me out to the United States, secretly wishing to find a whole self. My curriculum here, though, has led me into, a "middle ground," a third space, a transformative space, hosting ambivalence, contradictions, fragmentation, and also attraction. If tensions cannot be resolved, so be it. Dwelling in it, perhaps I would be able to think more, experience more, and reflect more.

Reading Tuan Yi-Fu's (1999) autobiography: Who am I: An Autobiography of Emotion, Mind, and Spirit brings me a revelation. A Chinese-American humanistic geographer, Tuan Yi-Fu is a highly accomplished scholar, whose achievement in geography, which is dominated by American "self-assured maleness" (p. 120), is quite remarkable. A gay man who was conscious of his own "sexual bent" at the age of fifteen but never really came out and remains single, who has devoted all his life to space, place, aesthetics, and the spirituality of geography, finally confesses, "except for a brief period in childhood, I have been afraid of life" (p. 119). A life vitalized through intimate human relationships. A creative scholar, who refuses the constraints of any labels or fashions, at the age of retirement, claims his immaturity with both regret and pride.

However satisfactory and intimate the relationships one has with others, I suspect that everyone must experience that sense of "I am alone" even if just for a moment. The only difference is how people deal with it. In Tuan's case, it is pushed to the extreme, an extreme of not being able to relate to others in a way he likes, but also an extreme of originality cultivated from aloneness, and an extreme of departure from the norm all the time. However alluring union is--be it social, cosmic, or personal--it is permanently temporary. There is a saying in China: There is no banquet without ending in disbanding. A deep consciousness of this being alone, on the other hand is, I believe, the springboard for social sympathy and cosmic unity. Without acknowledging the self's aloneness, how can one realize and respect the other's aloneness without putting others into one's own boot through "empathy," which Bakhtin refuses to use as the link

between self and other? Without a solitary experience of land and the universe, how can one become aware of the self as part of the landscape?

This deep sense of being alone is also my personal struggle, a struggle pushing me to find a way to be related to others that I may feel comfortable; a struggle, I begin to believe, which also takes me to search for a third space, through the absent presence of others and distant echoes, to be who I am and to become what I will become. When I attempt to reach an "impossible synthesis," I remain unsatisfied however hard I try. There is something missing from the language of singularity, relationality, and creativity. Can I dive into this depth of profound aloneness and come out alive with both the self and the world? How can the language of singularity, relationality, and creativity be possible without acknowledging the existential condition of the aloneness of an individual? Perhaps because of my resistance against psychoanalysis in general, I fail to appreciate its theory of founding an individual identity on the basis of separation. I also suspect that Chinese philosophy and culture at large do not address the sense of separation and alterity very successfully. Might it be a piece of a jigsaw I can pick up and fit into the messy picture of the human self? However fluid, relational, and in flux the self can be, I believe, the self needs to be claimed not only as a racial, ethnic, gendered, classed, religious self in a categorical though intersecting way; it also needs to be based upon the uniqueness of individual existence as one travels through and with the world. Without this sense of aloneness (not the same as loneliness), the relational and creative self sounds superficial. Am I negating everything I have said about self/other, community, and the ecology of selfhood? How can I make a link between the sense of aloneness and a third space? Traveling alone in multiple worlds has helped

me to claim a sense of independence in an interdependent manner rather than a pure trust in the ideal of autonomy. Originality at the expense of intimate human relationships is certainly not what I am after. Yet, the return of aloneness at another level, enriched by my tours through other worlds, other texts, other languages, and other selves, makes the movement toward a third space possible. And this third space is actually my *own* space created possibly by co-journeying and co-experiencing of self and the world. My *own* space is also a *multiple* space--three as a number means "multiple" in ancient Chinese. Deeply touched by Tuan's self-reflection, I renew my search for curriculum in a third space.

Nurturing through silence in the classroom in order to achieve transformative understanding or dwelling in an existential condition of meditation about life has become a theme curriculum scholars pay attention to. Its significance can be shown in a special issue of the Journal of Curriculum Theorizing devoted to the theme of "understanding curriculum as silence and solitude" (Slattery, 1999). There are moments of silence or solitude that inspire my revelations. There are times when I swing quietly in front of my apartment letting my mind jump all over the place. Yet oddly I become able to touch upon distant images. Quite often, though, I lock myself up in my room, reading and writing, but still having to stop my laughter, realizing that my roommate is in the next room. I cherish those moments of silence and solitude that lead me to remember, to reflect, to make sense of random thoughts, and to be fully immersed with myself and simultaneously fully aware of the world. To teach in a critical and reflective way, I believe the nourishment of silence needs to be cultivated in the classroom. Although bringing discomfort and disruption, it can stimulate deep reflection and

independent thinking. Tuan Yi-Fu (Monaghan, 2001, A16) does not hesitate to remain silent for seconds before he offers his answer and he also argues for the necessity of encouraging students to close their minds so they are not carried away by casual, lazy, and taken-for-granted ideas. Close one's eyes; what can one see? Encouraged to probe deep inside, when one opens one's eyes again, the familiar world might become different. Some feminists (See Pinar et al., 1995, Chapter 10) emphasize the importance of voice and call for "breaking the silence" through feminist pedagogy. Acknowledging this importance, in order to break the silences of women's experiences, to challenge gendered stereotypes, I wonder, do we not need nourishing moments of silence to look inside so that voices hidden might come out? Silence nurturing the moment of breaking silence.

Showing students the teacher's process of thinking with its own pauses, fluctuations, and detours, when not too much for them, also can have a deep effect in guiding and challenging students to go beyond. As Phillip Jackson (1998) describes it, John Dewey's lecture style had a very unsettling and contradictory effect on students, some of whom took it as intolerable while some considered it particularly enlightening. The opportunity to listen to a teacher "actually *thinking* in the presence of a class" (1998, p. 184)--quoting one of Dewey's students--is indeed intellectually fascinating; although I suspect monologue itself is questionable.

Hwu Wen-Song believes that the Foucaultian/Taoist self "is constituted, constituting, and constitutive at the same time" (Hwu, 1998, p. 36). He suggests that critical teaching needs to displace commonly held conceptions and to invent through the unthinkable so that ruptures can be created to bring forth something new. While I

envision a third space as a creative space, freeing students from the accepted and the habitual, I also think every student's own space is different and can only be crafted by different approaches. To call students' potential into existence requires the teacher's patience and "practical wisdom" (Garrison, 1997). William Doll names his own pedagogy as "non-linear teaching," by which he intends to open a space in which rich initial beginnings, multiple perspectives, and open-ended inquiry with a recursive loop structure host a chaotic creativity. This is a dancing curriculum (Doll, 1993), to use another of his metaphors. Such an approach, I believe, gives students more freedom to carve out their own sense of the self through critical reflection and interactive relationships.

To juxtapose all these different approaches as possible ways of creating a curriculum dwelling in a third space, I intend to show that the richness and complexity of this space is not confined within any model. By imagining beyond the conventional, many pedagogical approaches can be created in a contextualized and situated way. But one thing I have learned is that this sense of "beyond" needs to be achieved by "the right distance" (Taubman, 1992).

In Shanghai, one day I am upset and tell myself: Oh well, there is no third space after all. Even if a third space exists, I certainly do not have enough emotional detachment to be able to dwell in it. Unhappily I go to visit my parents' friend. She usually does not talk much and used to intimidate me. However, whenever I am in trouble, oddly I can feel my relatedness to her. While I am sitting there helping her with green beans silently, I can feel her presence. She smiles at me knowingly in her best Chinese manner: "Nothing is that important. Be happy, Hongyu." I raise my head

and laugh: "Thanks, Aunt Zheng." What she implies is not to take things seriously and to be more playful (with contradictions). When I leave her after lunch, I am somehow relieved. To take the burden off my shoulder, perhaps, I need to be aware of having my own space while allowing others to have their own spaces. Such an affirmation of both self and other asks me to claim myself while letting myself go. A third space is indeed a space embracing contradictions, which asks me not to assume that contradictory directions must meet--an impossible meeting. It is the process of trying to reach out for the other that really matters. Swinging in both directions simultaneously I can neither be submitted to others' gaze, nor can I be so stubborn as to hold on to my own ideal. A swing in silence, but also in humor.

Pedagogically speaking, in Taubman's terms, a teacher's position needs to be sustained "between the one who knows and the one who cares" (p. 233). My love for my students needs to be negotiated with my wisdom as a teacher to guide them through their personal journey not as "master," but neither as merged with the other in the mirror. If part of me will always stand on the bridge, no matter how, perhaps what I need to do is to be more playful and to turn life into comedy, as Mary Doll (1995) phrases it so well.

The necessity of creating a space embracing ambiguity and contradictions for a provocative pedagogy is affirmed by curriculum scholars in this so-called post-modern age. Slattery and Morris (1999), for instance, point out that embracing the ambiguity of our existence and teaching/learning process is the first step towards a pedagogy for new possibilities. I believe that such an embracing, without a certain sense of play, tolerance, and humor, can be unbearably painful while the quest for certainty is so taken

for granted. Actually young children's play shows us that they are far more willing to risk expanding limits than we allow them to. Regretfully, after children go to school, they are often required to follow established rules and normative standards, which leaves little space for them to be playful with the world. A theatrical sense of life and curriculum through an interactive play between chaos and order (Doll, 1993) is important for turning "sadness into joy, and death into life" (Schweitzer, 1991, p. 142).

Revisiting her own book Teacher as Stranger, Maxine Greene (2000) not only acknowledges "not having thought about feminist points of view at that time," she also suggests that the stranger must become an active participant in the "community-in-the-making" to be engaged in transforming society and culture at large. The limitations of teacher as stranger are also pointed out by Alan Block (1998) as a Jewish teacher who is already a stranger. Donna Porche-Frilot (2002) also contests the metaphor of stranger from an African-American point of view. As a person who has struggled with the sense of being alone both outside and inside of my own culture, however, I still believe in the potential of stranger and strangeness to lead me on a journey to create a third space. The stranger as a participant brings fluidity into the community. When the danger of the stranger is excluded, just as we have seen in the rhetoric of standards, testing, and national superiority, the possibility for the stranger to open up new horizons is also closed. A third space where teacher and student dance together is the "middle ground" on which harmony in differences and polyphony in unity can interact in a playful way.

Working on the "middle ground," Grumet (1988) attempts to build bridges and passages between the private and the public, the body and the mind, connection and separation, nature and culture, biology and ideology, in order to transform the school

into the middle place that "invites the most loving and creative expressions of masculinity and femininity" (p. xix). The middle ground is a relational ambiguous place in which human imagination can be released to take our children not to father's house but on the road to become who they can be. Echoing Kristeva's notion of creative womanhood, I believe that women teachers need to stage their teaching in a third space which creates passages between caring and educating. I have come to believe in the power of playing with "in-between," and detouring through "passages" to create a pedagogy of ambiguity which embraces both independence and interdependence. A third space with the web of relationships upholds a courageous self in a communal journey of weaving a richer and a more inclusive network of humanity. It is a shifting space, in which the call of the stranger on a journey home can be heard and responded to, through time and place.

Confucius' wisdom in "educating students in accordance with their aptitude" suggests not only that "the right distance" is different for each student, but also, I believe, that it is an ideal that any individual teacher can hardly achieve alone. No teacher, however wonderful s/he is, can reach every student in the classroom because teacher and student have their own personal styles which do not always match each other. So comes the importance of building a community of teachers and students. If some teachers can manage to meet some students somehow in a third space, other teachers may lead other students out and back, with a vibration of richness; and a communal inquiry in the classroom may help students meet each other with both intimacy and questioning. Janet Miller (1990) certainly understands the importance of building community to create spaces. As problematic as is the notion of collaboration,

connections are still possible across fragmentation. Actually I believe differences are necessary in order for teachers to respond to students' own personal struggles. When a student's fragile voice fails to reach one teacher, another teacher's ears might be open. The goal of collaboration is not to reach consensus, but to learn from each other to become more attentive to our students, and also to ourselves. Working together, we as teachers are moving towards a shifting space which remains open to different callings, different fears, and different dreams, our own and those of our students.

What is a third space, anyway? Can I really define it? It is simultaneously the third, the one, and the multiple. The third beyond "either-or," the third beyond "in-between," and the third beyond "both-and." The third out of the conflicting double. Embodying and flying over simultaneously "both-and" into the one, of one's *own*, of independence embedded in interdependence. Interdependence gives birth to the multiple, the multiple of re-generation and creation, the multiple of the interaction between the one and the third. Do I really need to define it? The teacher's third space shifts and emerges through interaction with students' own spaces to communally open new possibilities. Dialogue and conversation with texts are also situated in a third space asking students to reach out, to experience, to understand, to experiment, and to form their own sense of the self. Students who are engaged in an educational journey are also creating their own third space through the dynamics of the third, the one, and the multiple. One's third space moves as one interacts with a different person, a different text in a different situation. The art of pedagogy is to work together, teachers and students, in third spaces to journey into co/self-transformation and co/self-creation. While the *Tao* which gives birth to One, to Two, to Three, and then to the universe

cannot be defined, neither do I want to specify this "third space" I have tried to struggle with all along. It is a space one must dwell in to gain one's own insights.

Now is it time for me to conclude? How am I going to conclude after what I have already said which I do not want to repeat? How can I skillfully re-iterate the already spoken without much repetition? Even saying "no conclusion" as conclusion does not seem to serve me well. About this simple and yet complicated life I have (the contemporary woman poet Shu Ting says, "I am simple so I am profound"), infinitely enriched and expanded by histories, her stories, cultures, places, and people I have met and loved, about these rumination about education and curriculum, which is actually my life stretching back to the past and forward to the future burdening my present, I may still have so much to share yet oddly at the moment of conclusion, I feel I have little to say. I had hoped to stand upon the shoulders of Confucius, Foucault, and Kristeva to fly, yet I am still on the ground doing my own labor. Lucky me, finally I feel grounded, not only by these great thinkers and curriculum theorists, but also by myself, an ordinary, timid, yet persistent soul longing and searching for her own space. I am still going down the road; even if I might lose ground again somehow, somewhere, I will manage to stand up again. Jim Garrison says, "If we allow ourselves to grow, we will lose our 'selves,' our personal identity, many times along the way" (1997, p. 38). Considering the nature of my project, actually what I really want my conclusion to be is not to conclude my struggle with the human self and curriculum, but to point to alternative directions after this initial beginning of a gendered East/West inquiry. Conclusion can be departure instead of summary. Still on the road, though, I am yet to know. Somehow I resist weaving my analysis neatly back into a whole--you have heard

my conflicting voices, sensed my struggles, and seen my shifting positions--in the hope that I may permit myself to plant some seeds which will grow later. But before I can start all over again, may I ask you to listen, listen to the call of Bei Dao (1991)--a contemporary Chinese poet--for departure:

Let's go,
dry leaves blowing down the valley,
homeless, singing.

Let's go,
moonlight on river ice,
overflowing.

Let's go,
watching the same patch of sky,
hearts drumming in the dusk.

Let's go,
we know by heart
the way to the fountainhead.

Let's go
down the road, strolling through drifts
of scarlet poppies.

Let us re-start our journey with our children, to the embrace of the valley, the mysterious yet intimate whisper, singing the voiceless song of the stranger. Let us travel to the crystal source of fountain, touching upon the gentle wave of water to flow into creative melodies of life. Let us return to the call of the sky, the stern yet loving voice, flying beyond the edge of the familiar and what is at hand, in the music, dancing into the unknown. Let us renew our journey to swing, yet again, to the wilderness, this time under moon/light, to re-experience our deep connection with our land, earth, and sky, forming a trinity with mother and father to be carried away by the homeless tide back home. One's own home in a shifting third space. Please listen, listen carefully,

listen to yourself, listen to the other, listen to the distant, strange yet intimate calling
from other worlds

Co-journeying into a world or many worlds different from what we have,
returning to our own world to rebuild homes, we and our children are forever on the
road through a third space to create new realms of life with tears, laughter, screams,
love, pain, and prayer. Are we ready, holding hands, to go?

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VITA

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DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

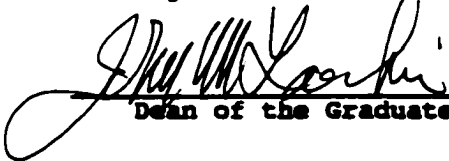
Candidate: Hongyu Wang

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Title of Dissertation: The Call from the Stranger on a Journey Home: Curriculum as Creative Transformation of Selfhood

Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman

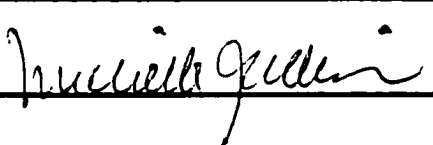

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE:









Date of Examination:

September 27, 2001
